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DAYANAND

HIS LIFE AND WORK

By

SURAJ BHAN

"I offer my homage of veneration to Swami Dayananda, the great path-maker in modern India who, through bewildering tangles of creeds and practices—the dense undergrowth of the degenerate days our country, cleared a straight path that was meant to lead the Hindus to a simple and rational life of devotion to God and service for man. With a clear-sighted vision of truth and courage of determination he preached and worked for our self-respect and vigorous awakenment of mind that could strive for a harmonious adjustment with the progressive spirit of the modern age and, at the same time, keep in perfect touch with that glorious past of India when it revealed its personality in free- tion in an unclouded radiance of

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पुस्तकालय

गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय, हरिद्वार

वर्ग संख्या ..... आगत संख्या.....

पुस्तक विवरण की तिथि नीचे अंकित है। इस तिथि सहित ३० वें दिन यह पुस्तक पुस्तकालय में वापस आ जानी चाहिए। अन्यथा ५० पैसे प्रति दिन के हिसाब से विलम्ब दण्ड लगेगा।

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DAYANAND

HIS LIFE AND WORK

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पुस्तकालय
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गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय

By

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PART I

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PREFACE

There are not many biographies of the great Rishi written in English and hence no apology is needed for bringing out this book. Without in any way minimising the laudable efforts made by biographers like Bawa Chhajju Singh, Sadhu Vaswani, Pt. Chamupati, Har Bilas Sarda and Dr. B. M. Sharma, I have always felt the need of a book on Dayanand which should not be frightening on account of its bulk, and should at the same time give the reader a general idea of the great reformer's life and his service to the Motherland. This book is a humble effort in that direction. I think that besides being a suitable biography for the general reader, it could very well be placed in the hands of the student community. The inspirational value of the work particularly for the latter class should be great.

SURAJ BHAN

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Dedicated

to

My Father, late Dr. Tota Ram
whose pious and saintly life
and devotion to the Arya Samaj,
are a standing inspiration.

S. B.

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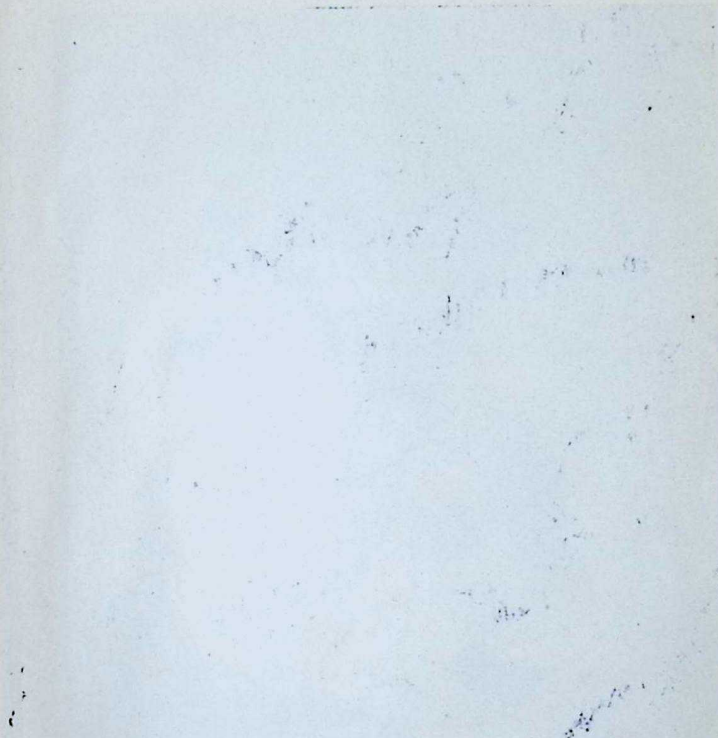

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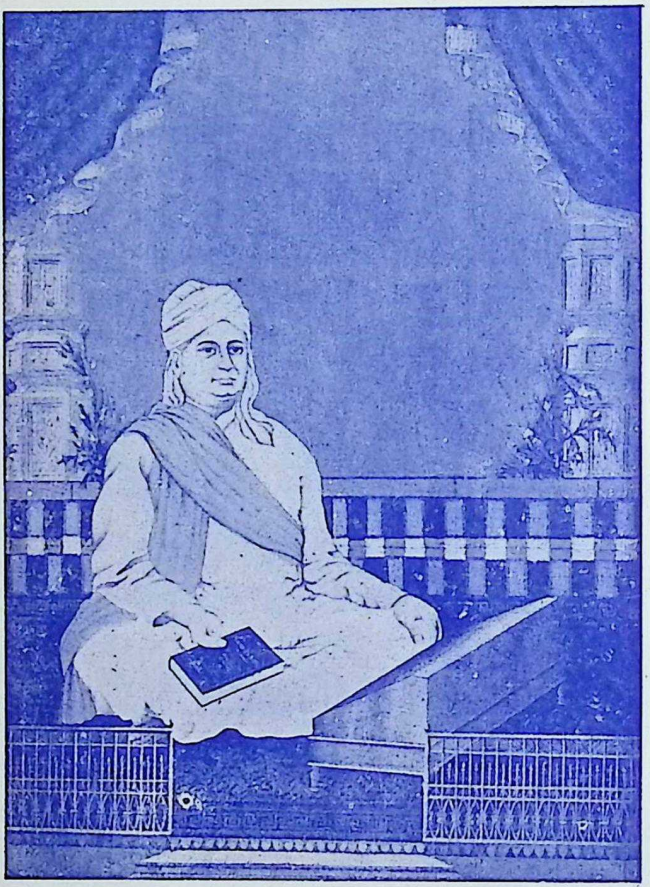

SWAMI DAYANAND SARASWATI

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DAYANAND
HIS LIFE AND WORK

CHAPTER I

THE FATEFUL NIGHT OF SHIVARATRI

It is the land of Saurashtra, the home of Indian patriots, that gave birth to our hero. In the year 1824 A.D., in a village in the state of Morvi in Kathiawar there was born in a Shaivite family one who in later life was destined to lead a great religious movement and to rank as one of the makers of modern India. His father Amba Shankar held the position of a Jamadar, or revenue collector and, besides this, did some banking and money-lending business. He was a stern, austere man, a devout worshipper of Shiva, orthodox and uncompromising in his views. Strict in the performance of his religious duties

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he could not tolerate the slightest departure from the observances enjoined by his faith.

When Mool Shankar (for that was the original name of Dayanand) was five years of age, his education began in conformity with the traditions of his family. He was taught the Devanagari alphabet and made to learn by rote some select *mantras* and *shlokas*. In his eighth year was performed his *yajnopavit* ceremony and the young boy was formally initiated into the study of the Yajurveda and began his career as a Brahman. A devotee of Shiva as his father was, he was anxious that his son should follow in his footsteps and grow up to be a thorough Shaivite. He, therefore, took his son to Shaiva festivals and meetings, and places where *katha* from Shiva Puran was recited. He would sometimes force him to observe fasts to propitiate Shiva. In vain did Mool Shankar's mother protest against these observances which, she said, were telling on the health of the young boy. Thus several years passed by. When Mool Shankar had attained the age of fourteen, he knew by heart, the whole of the Yajurveda, some parts of the other three Vedas and some works on Sanskrit grammar.

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The Shivaratri, the sacred day of the Shaivas came round. This day they observe as a fast and now that Mool Shankar was fourteen, his father did not see any reason why he should not keep it. The mother protested, as usual, but Amba Shankar was not to be easily dissuaded. The fast had to be kept.

As the evening set in, Mool Shankar reluctantly followed his father to a large Shaiva temple outside the village where the devotees of Shiva were to assemble and keep a vigil the whole night, as otherwise their fasts, it was believed, would bear no fruit. Worshippers and priests were pouring in and when the temple was fairly crowded, prayers began. Mool was struck with the enthusiasm and devotion of all present. The prayer-hall began to resound with the fervant chanting of sonorous hymns. There was not a soul but did not feel the thrill of the occasion. But as the night advanced, drowsiness and listlessness began to prevail, the animation in the proceedings vanished, and one man after another, after vainly battling with sleep, stretched himself on the floor. Mool Shankar's father was one of the foremost. The priests followed suit. The young boy was both surprised and

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pained to see what scant value the worshippers seemed to put on the fast. He himself was bent upon keeping awake. Why should he lose the prize which his elders had wantonly forfeited ?

Profound silence reigned in the temple. The young lad was again and again bathing his eyes with water to dispel sleep. His attention was all of a sudden diverted towards the idol. What did he see ? A mouse creeping out of its hole was taking liberties with the image of Shiva and was helping itself to the good things which had been offered by the worshippers. The pranks of the little creature aroused serious questionings in Mool Shankar's mind. The path of Truth is the path of questions and answers : many a man had seen an apple fall, it was Newton in whose mind the question arose : 'Why does it fall to the ground ?' An assiduous and patient search led him to the required answer : Law of Gravitation. Many had been to the temple of Shiva year after year, it was Mool Shankar who, seeing a mouse running over the image and eating the offerings, asked, "Can this image be the all-powerful God ?"

Thoughts upon thoughts crowded in upon

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his mind. "Can this idol I see before me be the deity, which according to Puranas holds a trident in his hand, bestrides a bull, plays upon the *dumroo*, bestows a boon on one and pronounces a curse on another, and destroys the universe at his sweet will, in the end. Is has not the power to hunt away a petty mouse from its presence."

Unable to suppress these questionings, and finding himself baffled to explain them, the young lad awakened his father and asked him to explain whether this idol of Shiva was the same as Mahadeva, the all-powerful and all-pervading being who rules the universe. Amba Shankar aroused from a half-finished sleep demanded in an angry tone,

"Why do you ask this question ?"

"How can a God allow mice to run over his body ?"

"This is only an image of a God who cannot be seen face to face in this age of Kaliyuga."

The angry tone of Amba Shankar silenced Mool Shankar but not the questionings of his mind. This reply could not set his doubts at rest.

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"If this is only an image, what claim has it on our homage ?" he thought to himself.

The explanation of the father had not carried conviction to the inquiring mind of Mool Shankar. He left the temple and went home. He was very hungry and now that he was away from the restrictive influence of his father, he had a hearty meal, and went to bed to enjoy an undisturbed sleep for the rest of the night.

Early next morning the young doubter received a stern reproof at the hands of his father but it failed to put out the light that had been kindled in him.

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CHAPTER II

THE INNER QUESTIONINGS

Mool Shankar now devoted himself to his studies. He read with a pundit *Nighantu*, *Nirukta*, *Purva Mimansa* and some other books. The affair in the temple would from time to time come before his mind's eyes, and set him brooding for hours over the problem.

About this time some thing happened which accentuated these inward questionings of the boy.

He was attending a musical entertainment in company with his father and several of his relatives, when a servant brought the news that his sister had been taken ill with cholera. The party hurried home. Physicians were summoned, but in spite of the best efforts to save her, she grew worse and worse and succumbed

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in a few hours. It was all weeping and wailing in the house. His loving sister whom he had seen hale and hearty a few hours before was lying dead like a stone. Mool Shankar stood like one petrified. His grief was too deep for tears. His father, mother and others began to rate him over his heartlessness.

Mool Shankar's grief was great—too great to be relieved by weeping. He stood in a profound reverie, when every one else was filling the chamber of death with cries and lamentations. Little did they know that this young man of sixteen, apparently so unmoved, had been moved deeply, and that he was pondering over the eternal problem of life and death, and of methods to get rid of life's miseries. "Shall death lay its icy hands on me, too, one day ? What must one do to meet the challenge of death and to gain immortality ?" Such questions were agitating the mind of our young hero. He left the room, much to the relief of those whom his seeming heartlessness was making uncomfortable, and threw himself on his bed. He lay buried in his thoughts saying to himself again and again, "Is there any remedy for this instability of life ? Is there no escape from death ?" The morning

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found Mool Shankar a changed being. The death had brought about a metamorphosis in his outlook on life.

Mool Shankar once more devoted himself to his studies. He had some vague thoughts of giving up this world but they had not taken any final shape. God willed that they should. In the year 1843, when Mool Shankar was 19, his paternal uncle upon whom the lad had always looked as his true friend and guide had an attack of the self-same disease as had carried off his dear sister. Despite the best medical assistance there was no improvement, and the case was felt to be hopeless. Lying on his death-bed, he sent for his nephew. With tears welling from his eyes, he cast at the young lad a look so fond and wistful that Mool Shankar could not help bursting into tears. There was something angelic about that man and the thought of imminent separation from him unnerved him. He wept and wept till his eyes swelled with weeping. The inevitable happened. His uncle died and once more the house was a scene of mourning.

This shock was a reminder. The questionings which might have calmed down with the lapse of time got a new impetus. The fire was

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re-kindled. Mool Shankar obsessed with the idea of seeking escape from death felt distracted. Everyone to whom he turned for the solution of this tangled problem gave him to understand that *moksha* (salvation) could be attained by *yogabhyasa* alone. It could be learnt by leading a life of great mental discipline under the guidance of competent teachers who lived lives of seclusion in forest retreats. It did not take Mool Shankar long to decide that this *yoga* must be learnt, at all costs. Even if it meant the abandonment of the joys of hearth and home, he would pay the heavy price. The lad was under a spell the like of which captures all great men at times. The pleasures of life to which we cling so doggedly in spite of a hundred disillusionment had lost all charm for him.

His father somehow got scent of his intentions. In his youthful enthusiasm Mool Shankar had talked out to some friends what he intended to do. This was a matter of deep concern for his father who began to think of means to wean him from such designs. The lad was beginning to soar, he must be brought to earth, and the only and in most cases the most efficacious remedy that suggested itself to him was

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that the boy should be married. The pleasures of matrimonial life will, to be sure, cure him of all his eccentricities and bind him down to a quiet, settled household life.

Mool Shankar was determined not to be such an easy prey. He told his father that he must finish his studies before going in for marriage and succeeded in inducing him to postpone it for a year. Mool Shankar was now twenty, and had begun to feel a genuine interest in his studies. He developed a veritable passion for books. He now proposed that he might be permitted to proceed to Kashi to prosecute his studies. Advanced study was not possible anywhere else. The proposal almost took his parents' breath away. They took it for a camouflage to renounce the world, and probably they were right. The young lad was told definitely that no proposal of the type could be entertained; they did not wish him to study any more, all that he had learnt was more than enough. Before long he would be married and he must devote his mind to worldly affairs in which he was soon to merge himself. The lad's mother went the length of remarking in a plain fashion, "I know, boys who study too much don't like to

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marry and I scent that intention in your proposal to go to Benares. For the life of me, I cannot permit you. You must marry now and settle down to a quiet life."

Mool Shankar now found time hang heavy on his hands. His wishes had been thwarted and he felt very miserable. As a compromise he suggested that he might be sent to a learned pundit, residing in a village about six miles from Morvi, and his parents who wished to chasten him out of his melancholy frame of mind allowed him to go. The shrewd priest could not fail to observe the indifference of Mool Shankar to worldly affairs. Besides, the latter was too young and inexperienced to conceal from his preceptor the inner workings of his mind. The matter was brought to the notice of his father who called him back. Preparation for his marriage began, as nothing else, his parents thought, could check his runaway tendencies. The young lad, as usual, protested. This, he said, would stand in the way of his studies, but these objections were treated with disdain.

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CHAPTER III

THE YOUNG RENUNCIANT

Preparations for Mool Shankar's marriage went on apace The whole house was *en fete*. Relations from far and near were pouring in to join the auspicious function. The parents were beside themselves with joy and so were relatives and friends, awaiting the happy day of marriage.

But it was going differently with our hero. He was not prepared to be drawn into the sensuous snare that was being spread out for him. He sought the advice of his friends as to what to do and each one of them advised him to marry. There was none to realise the loftiness of his ideals. After much thought, he felt convinced that the only way of escape lay in bidding goodbye to his parents, home and all. Only then

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could he pursue his cherished ambition uninterruptedly. Just as the preparations were complete and a few days more would find him married, Mool Shankar nerved himself for the final plunge into the dark, and quietly quitted the parental roof, never to return again.

Mool Shankar left his home in May 1844. He was at this time about twenty years of age. The first night he passed at a village eight miles distant from his own. Next day he got up early in the morning and resumed his journey, avoiding roads and frequented paths, and before it was evening, he had done about twenty-five miles. Being too tired to proceed further, he passed the night in a temple of Hanuman. His flight had stunned his parents and had cast a gloom over the home, erstwhile so full of rejoicings. Sepoys were sent in hot haste to hunt him up. But he had travelled a long distance, and after a diligent but fruitless search they returned home to the great disappointment of the sorrow-stricken family. Mool Shankar learnt that a party had been looking for a lad, thanked Heaven for his escape, and proceeded on his journey. In the way he met a set of miserable-looking mendicants, who deprived him of all gold and

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silver ornaments on his person. Artless and candid as our youthful hero was he gave out to them the aim of his wanderings and afforded them an argument for divesting him of all that he had. This they said would prepare him for a peaceful pursuit of immortality.

Next, Mool Shankar turned his steps towards a town Sayal by name, where he learnt a great scholar and saint Lal Bhagat was living. To him he related his adventures, and explained the object of his renunciation. This Bhagat initiated him into the order of Brahmcharis, and gave him the name of Shuddha Chaitanya or the pure-minded, a name which he deserved even at this stage of his life. He stayed here for some time practising austerities, just as other *sadhus* of this place did. Leaving Sayal he arrived at a town called Kot Kangra, where he came across a large number of Bairagis. He felt that he had not much to learn from them and although he stayed at Kot Kangra for three months, he had nothing to do with these people.

Soon after, learning that a *mela* would be held at Sidhpur, a railway station on the bank of the Saraswati, Shudha Chaitanya set out for the place. It was with the hope that he might

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come across some Yogi who could initiate him into Yoga, for the acquisition of which he had left his all. On his way he met a Bairagi who happened to know him and his family. The sight of an acquaintance after such a long time touched his heart, and caused him some perplexity, too. The Bairagi remonstrated with him for having entered the order of Brahmcharis, but our hero had burnt his boats and was not going to retrace his steps. They parted, each pursuing his own way. Reaching Sidhpur, Shudha Chaitanya put up at a temple already crowded with Swamis and Brahmcharis. In the meanwhile, the Bairagi sent word to the family of the run-away that he had seen on his way to Sidhpur.

The message once more set the father on his son's trail. He came accompanied by several sepoys to the fair and started a vigorous search. For two days no clue of the run-away was forthcoming. On the third day, early in the morning entering the temple of Mahadeva, he found himself face to face with his son, now looking a bit transformed on account of the *geru* clothes he was wearing.

The father's wrath was terrible. Taking hold

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of his clothes, he savagely tore them to tatters. With eyes red with rage he reproached him for having brought eternal disgrace to their family. Finding his father in a fit of anger Shuddha Chaitanya fell at his feet and with folded hands begged forgiveness. He said, he was already feeling penitent at what he had done and would be only too pleased to retrace his steps and accompany his father home. These words could hardly appease his father who took him to the place where he was putting up and ordered his sepoys to keep a strict watch over his movements.

Our youthful hero had not, however, changed his mind. It was fright that had made him assume the appearance of a contrite. Inwardly the young aspirant after *yoga-vidya* was as firm as ever and was on the look-out for an opportunity to regain his freedom. Night came on, and Shuddha Chaitanya found himself watched more closely. He lay in his bed, despondently looking at the sepoys who stood between him and his ideal. Lo, the sentinel who was on duty had fallen asleep. "Here's an opportunity. Now or never" he muttered to himself, left his bed and crept stealthily out of the house. He had covered about half a mile when he came across a temple with a lofty *pipal* tree growing near it. Anxious

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to elude the search which he knew, would certainly be made for him soon after, he climbed up and hid himself in the thickly covered branches.

The morning, found the sentinels without their ward and they started their search again. Shuddha Chaitanya had not been long in his novel retreat, when the dreaded sentinels arrived and began to look into every nook and corner of the temple. He held his breath in silence lest any movement on his part should give them the clue. It was with a sigh of relief, that he saw them retreating after a vigorous but fruitless search. The whole day he did not leave his hiding place, for fear of being captured. He had nothing to eat, and the only food, if food it may be called, was the water contained in a *lota* which he carried with him.

As soon as night set in, he quietly slipped down the tree and resumed his journey, halting at a place some four miles from the temple. Early in the morning he started off afresh. After spending some time in Ahmedabad and Baroda, he betook himself to a conference to be held on the bank of the Narbada where he hoped to meet some Yogis. Here he read several works on Vedanta under a Sanyasi, Paramahansa Paramanand.

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CHAPTER IV

IN QUEST OF SOUL'S HOMELAND

The hero is not fed on sweets,
Daily his own heart he eats.—*Emerson.*

As a Brahmachari, Shuddha Chaitanya had to cook his food himself, and this greatly interfered with his studies He was, therefore, anxious to enter the *Sanyasa-ashrama.* This would help him in another way too; it would minimise the chances of his being found by the members of his family. Accordingly he approached a Sanyasi named Chidashrama to give him the Sanyasa. His request was refused on the ground of his being too young for the ashrama.

This did not dismay our young Brahmachari who continued his studies with unflagging zeal on the bank of the river Narbada, waiting

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for a more favourable opportunity. At last he saw one day a Dandi Swami and a Brahmachari both of whom had halted in a forest near by *en route* for Dwarika. Shuddha Chaitanya at first opened his heart to the Brahmchari and asked him to intercede for him with Swami Purnanand (this was the Sanyasi's name), so that he might be pleased to initiate him into Sanyasashrama. After some hesitation the Swami agreed to give him the staff of his order, naming him Swami Dayanand Saraswati. Dayanand stayed and studied with his guru for some time and again started in quest of yogis.

The scope of this book does not permit going into all the details of Dayanand's wanderings in quest of Soul's Homeland. For full fifteen years from 1845 to 1860, young Dayanand wandered almost all over India. He went from place to place inquiring after yogis and sadhus. Whenever he learnt that at a certain place there resided a yogi or a sanyasi, he would dash for it, come what might. No difficulty could deter him from his resolve. He visited all the Hindu places of pilgrimage, and some he visited more than once. In his

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ceaseless search for scholars of renown and men of wisdom, he penetrated into the innermost recesses of the Himalayas, the Vindhyas and the Aravallis. He crossed the valleys of the Ganges, the Jumna and the Narbada many a time and followed the rivers up to their sources. He had to encounter great dangers in his travels, but he never lost his presence of mind. There were times when a petty slip of the foot might plunge him over a precipice into the roaring torrent below. On occasions he would find his way blocked by a thick growth of thorny bushes. Undaunted, he would move on, walking through prickly thorns, which literally tore his flesh into shreds. On winter nights, in benumbing cold, the young wanderer would be seen wending his lonely way, with surprisingly inadequate clothing. For days and days he had nothing but wild fruits to live upon. Such was the hard training our hero received in the lap of nature during this period of his life. It fitted him for the life which he was to lead in years to come.

विद्याधर स्मृति संग्रह

Once on his way to the Himalayas, Dayanand happened to halt at the famous

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Okhi Math. The Mahant of the Math was impressed by the personality and scholarship of Dayanand. Anxious to secure him as his disciple, he made him a very tempting offer.

"If you become our disciple," he said, "you will be the master of all our wealth. Thousands of our followers will be at your service."

The offer held out a brilliant prospect of a happy future. But the Mahant did not know that Dayanand was not the man to be seduced by these allurements. The latter's reply gives us a glimpse into his character.

"Mahantji, do you think it is for this life of pleasure that I discarded all my worldly possessions and comforts ? You seem to have no idea of the treasures, far more valuable than these, for the sake of which I have voluntarily given up the opulence of my paternal home. Tempt me not, for my heart is set on the acquisition of true knowledge and genuine Yoga."

The Mahant had never witnessed such profound contempt for wealth, and stood dumb-founded. He praised Dayanand's strength of purpose and requested him to stay for a few days. But Dayanand declined.

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CHAPTER V

THE BLIND MONK OF MATHURA

Virajanand—for this is the name of our Blind Monk—was brought up in the lap of adversity. Born in the house of a Brahmin, Narain Dutt by name, at Kartarpur, he was five years old when he had an attack of small-pox which left him blind for life. But worse was to follow. He was hardly eleven when the deaths of his father and mother left him an orphan. He was now at the mercy of his brother, whose wife happened to be a very selfish and peevish woman, who would often torment the poor boy and hint that he should better leave her house. His brother was too timid to protest and he felt that both of them wanted to get rid of him. He was conscious of his helplessness, and yet was too spirited to submit to this tyranny. Sad at heart, he bade

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adieu to his paternal home, and cast himself adrift on the wide world.

The boy set out towards Hardwar – the home of the homeless. The journey was an arduous one and his blindness exposed him to many hardships but it was accomplished somehow. Here he commenced a life of study and learnt all that the best and most learned in Hardwar could teach him. He was remarkably intelligent, and possessed a wonderful memory. It did not take him long to gain a reputation for scholarship. It was in his eighteenth year that he was initiated into Sanyasa by a worthy sanyasi, Swami Purnanand by name. Virajanand continued his studies with great assiduity and developed into a profound Vedic Scholar. He impressed all round him with his depth of learning and intellectual gifts. It was not without reason that people called him Prajna Chakshu or one gifted with the inner vision. One day the Maharaja of Alwar heard him recite the *Vishnu stotra* of the Great Shanker and was so much moved by his rich and sonorous tones that he requested him to accompany him to Alwar. The Swami hesitated, but on the Raja's insistence he consented on the condition that His Highness would read Shastras with him

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for three hours every day, and that if he missed a single lesson, the Swami would leave his state. Having reached Alwar, the Raja treated him with great respect and care, and took his lessons regularly. Three years passed away. One day the Maharaja joined a pleasure party, when it was time for getting his lessons. When he returned and went to his preceptor, the latter was in great temper.

"Prince, you have broken your word ; I cannot."

The Maharaja begged the Swami's forgiveness, but in vain. The latter left for Bharatpur without caring to inform the Prince that he was going. Little do people endowed with inward riches care for outward wealth and glory.

Virajanand stayed for a few months at Bharatpur whence he proceeded to Mathura. Here he resolved to settle down and started a school. For this purpose he rented a building. His reputation as a great scholar and keen teacher attracted a good many pupils. As his fame spread, the citizens of Mathura began to hold him in great esteem. Many important men paid him visits and every one was struck

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by his deep learning and greatness in the advocacy of what he thought to be right.

Virajanand abhorred all Sanskrit books which are not *rishikrita*, and held the Puranas in profound contempt. He would not refrain from giving vent to this abhorrence even in the presence of orthodox Pandits of the opposite school. He was conscious of his strength and knew he could vindicate his position, if any one dared take exception to his view.

To such a monk, on the 14th of November, 1860, Dayanand repaired in all humbleness of spirit. He was thirty-six at this time, but the advance in years had not seen any waning in his eagerness for learning.

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CHAPTER VI

A MEETING OF TWO KINDRED SOULS

There was a tap at Swami Virajanand's door.

"Who is there ?"

"A Sanyasi."

"What is your name ?"

"Dayanand Saraswati "

"Do you know *Vyakarana* ?"

"Yes, I have studied Saraswata, etc."

At this reply the door opened, and Dayanand walked in. He stated his errand in a humble manner. Virajanand, after putting the young aspirant for knowledge some questions to test his previous knowledge, addressed him thus :—

"Dayanand, there is a vast difference between the Rishikrita granthas of pre-Mahabharata

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days, and the post-Mahabharata Sanskrit literature which is the work of ordinary human beings. The former is characterised by sublimity of thought, natural and spontaneous mode of expression and a lofty spirituality, the latter, written by narrow-minded and prejudiced men, lacks that universality of appeal, which the former has. That I abhor this post-Maha bharata literature is well known. It seems that you will have to disabuse your mind of all that you have learnt, before you can begin your studies here."

"Just as you please," Dayanand answered after some thought.

"And throw all the books into the river flowing near by."

"I shall do it," said Dayanand with a pang, He dared not refuse. He seemed to be under a spell.

"But there is another thing, yet. Generally I don't teach Sanyasis. They don't cook their own food, and I have none to give them. So you will have to make your own arrangements, before you can hope to devote yourself to your studies whole-heartedly."

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"You need have no anxiety on that account, Sir, I would be the last man to trouble you about my food arrangements."

Dayanand was formally admitted as a pupil. Unluckily, at this time the province was in the throes of a terrible famine, and even the rich found it hard to give anything in charity. Our hero had, therefore, a very hard time. But he faced it like a man, and lived on the coarsest food available and would even go without food, at times. At last the clouds began to lift, and one Pandit Amar Lal, a well-to-do astronomer of Mathura, struck by Dayanand's scholarship and personality, took upon himself to supply him with food and with books. It is said that this Pandit was a great friend of the needy, and scores of Brahmins feasted daily at his dwelling. Dayanand used to speak of this man with feelings of heartfelt gratitude all his life.

Dayanand's stay at Mathura was characterised by incessant toil. He worked the whole day, and would often be seen studying at night by the light of the earthen lamps which women deposited into the crevices of wells. In his moments of leisure he would hold discussions

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with those around him, and all this he did in addition to so many miscellaneous duties, which as a dutiful disciple he had to perform. He would sweep the floor, wash his clothes and bring pitchers of water from the Jumna every day for the use of his preceptor. In spite of the fact that Virajanand was a man of choleric temper and would go into wrath over trivial matters, Dayanand served him with filial love. Once he actually inflicted corporal punishment on Dayanand. The latter took it unmoved and addressed his guru as follows : "Sir, you should not put yourself to so much trouble on my account. My body is so hard that I am not likely to suffer much. But your hands, delicate as they are, must be feeling the exertion caused by it." The punishment left a scar on his body and in after life it brought to him happy recollections of a happy time passed with Virajanand. He took it to be the stamp of his guru's love.

At the feet of this blind Monk of Mathura Dayanand sat for two years and a half, and drank deep at the founts of spiritual learning. At last the parting day came. Virajanand told him that he had nothing more to give him. This disciple with half a seer of cloves in his

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hands approached his preceptor, and begged permission to depart.

"My revered Guru, I have nothing else to give you, a poor man as I am."

"And I shan't ask you for any thing that you don't possess."

"Most holy Sir, whatever I have is at your disposal."

"Yes, you have acquired knowledge, go and disseminate it. Dispel the darkness of ignorance which prevails. Wage a warfare against the false-hoods which have taken hold of the minds of your misguided brethren. They quarrel about castes and creeds and know not the Vedas. Give them the message of the Vedic Religion. I want this pledge, give it if you are keen to pay my *dakshina*."

The pledge, was solemnly given and no less solemnly kept, as the coming pages will show.

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CHAPTER VII

INTO THE ARENA

It did not take our hero long to enter upon the work entrusted to him by his revered guru. He did not accomplish much in the first four or five years, which rightly speaking, may be called years of preparation for the great struggle. In these years he assimilated what he had already learnt, and disciplined himself for the stupendous task that was ahead. The experience of these years changed him from a pure idealist to a practical reformer who knows the task he has to do and the stern realities he has to face.

After taking leave of his guru, Dayanand started visiting the important towns of the United Provinces. From Mathura he went to Agra where he delivered lectures condemning idolatry

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and other practices which he considered to be evil. In 1865, he proceeded to Gwalior where the Maharaja had ordered a *Saptahika* or seven-day's *Katha* of the *Bhagavata*. Here Dayanand fearlessly exposed the immorality of the book. This offended the Maharaja, but accidentally there occurred some deaths in the royal family immediately after the termination of the *Katha*, and any action against the Swami who came to be looked upon as a prophet (quite undeservedly though) was unthinkable. Then he went to Jaipur, where, as usual, he delivered sermons and held discussions. He accepted many a challenge for debate, but where it came to actual discussion, the challengers took refuge in dilly-dallying. The Swami's presence itself was sanctifying, and many men who came to hear him went back his converts, feeling ennobled for having been in his company.

In 1866, the Swami went to Ajmer, where he started a vigorous denunciation of idol-worship. His outspoken utterances and his masterly exposition of the tenets of Hindu Religion attracted large audiences. He issued challenges, and worsted his antagonists. One of them was Rev. Mr. Robinson, who became

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a great admirer of the Swami after the discussion. His words, "The Swami is profoundly versed in the Vedas. I have never seen so learned a man in my entire life. Such individuals are rare in the world and their company cannot but be productive of good to all," speak for themselves and need no comment. The Swami called upon Mr. Davidson, the Commissioner of Ajmer and urged on him the necessity of eradicating social evils by legislation. The reply of the latter was that the Government were not prepared to interfere in matters pertaining to religion. He approached the Agent to the Governor-General in Council with a request to stop cow-killing in India, setting forth in detail, the benefits which will accrue to the Government and the people, as a consequence. The Agent intimated to him his regret that he was unable to do anything in the matter.

The Kumbh Fair of Hardwar was approaching and Dayanand thought it was a magnificent opportunity for him to preach his doctrines. He, therefore, with three or four followers of his went to Hardwar, and took up his abode in a temporary shed which was put up about three miles from the town. It was a month before the actual

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date of the fair. Thousands of Hindus of all faiths were pouring in every day, and Dayanand had time enough to observe things. Here he saw Puranic Hinduism at its worst. His experience had already shown him enough of the rank ignorance that prevailed, but this visit was a real eye-opener. The fair was a sad spectacle of the dark and false side of religion displayed in all nakedness. So much of idol-worship, of fraud practised on blind unknowing people, of depravity, he had never seen before. His heart sickened at the sight he saw every day.

It was here that Dayanand realised the enormity of the task before him. But undaunted he unfurled his war flag, *Pakhand Khandani Pataka* (flag of war against hypocrisy) and began to thunder against idolatry and other evil practices he had witnessed. Such a vehement denunciation of idol-worship, the huge fraud of pilgrimages, Puranic beliefs and similar conventional creeds at Hardwar, their very stronghold was an uncommon sight. There was a commotion, and Dayanand was the talk of the huge gathering. High and low, rich and poor, impelled by curiosity flocked to his place and listened to him with dumb surprise. Some returned with their faiths shaken, others half-confused, still others indignant

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at what they dubbed his atheism. It was a little different with the Pandas whose vital interest was adversely affected by the vigorous onslaughts of Dayanand. A counter-campaign was started to decry the Swami and his teachings. Questionable means were not left untried : he was cajoled, abused and threatened, but true to his dictum

निन्दन्तु नीतिनिपुणा यदि वा स्तुवन्तु
लक्ष्मीः समाविशतु गच्छतु वा यथेष्टम्
अद्यैव वा मरणमस्तु युगान्तरे वा
न्याय्यात्पथः प्रविचलन्ति पदं न धीराः

(Wise men may praise or censure, wealth may come or go; Death may seize today or after centuries, but the firm-minded do not swerve a step from the right path.)

the Swami treated the small doings of the small beings with the contempt they deserved.

But the Kumbh Fair left the Swami sad and depressed. He had believed that it would afford a unique opportunity for the propagation of his ideas, but he had not judged the strength of the citadel of orthodoxy aright. Thousands came, listened to him and left ; not one seemed to have the courage to espouse what he said. For once the shadow of doubt crossed his mind

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and he felt despondent. "Can I cope with this colossal task and fight the hydra-headed demon of ignorance and superstition single-handed ?"

Fortunately this fit of despondency did not last long, only it led to greater introspection. "Perhaps my equipment for this task is not adequate. I need more of renunciation, and moral force," mused he. With such thoughts he distributed all he had in the shape of clothes and utensils among his followers and sent some money together with a copy of the Mahabhashya to his Guru at Mathura. This amazed his friends, but he explained to them that the needs of one who wishes to be independent must be reduced to a minimum ; he must be above petty comforts and discomforts of life.

The Swami now retired into solitude and public speaking and debating ceased. A regular life of *tapa* began. But how long was this silence to continue? One day a mischief-monger approaching his hut made some remarks derogatory to the Vedas. The incensed Swami could not keep quiet and began his preaching work again. But this should not mean that there was any abatement in his *tapasya*.

The Swami started going from town to

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town to denounce un-Vedic practices and unfold the beauties of Vedic truths. At Anupashahar a debate on 'idol-worship' took place with Shastri Hira Vallabha Parbati. The condition of the debate was that the loser would accept the beliefs of the opponent. The Shastri, finding himself in a quandary, rose from his seat, acknowledged in the presence of the whole assembly that idolatry was false, took his idols and flung them into the Ganges. Several others followed suit, and the debate ended with victorious acclamations for the great Swami.

Dayanand, like a true reformer was very unsparing in his denunciation of idolatry and equally emphatic on his glorification of Vedic truths. This caused no small alarm in the minds of people with vested interests whose princely incomes were jeopardised by Swamiji's ruthless exposure of their iniquitous trade. It was natural, therefore, that these people should set up machinations to make short shrift of their exposer.

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CHAPTER VIII

PRICE FOR TRUTHFULNESS

At Anupashahar, a Brahmin came to Swamiji and presented him with a betel-leaf. The unsuspecting Swami took the leaf and began to chew it, but it did not take him long to discover that poison had been mixed with it. Without speaking a word to this deceitful Brahmin, he ran to the Ganges, to perform *neoli-karma*. Fortunately this was successful, and the Swami kept quiet about the affair. But somehow the admirers of Swamiji got wind of this dastardly attempt, and they were naturally not so forgiving. Among these was Sayyad Mahmud, the Tahsildar of Anupashahar who sent for the scoundrel and sent him to the lock-up. When Mahmud went to enquire about Swamiji's

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health, gloating all the while over the meet punishment he had administered to the Brahmin, he was amazed to find Swamiji annoyed.

"Have I done anything to displease you?"

"Of course ; I have come into the world to relieve people from captivity, not to see them sent into prison. If the wicked do not forsake their wickedness, why should the good their goodness ? I cannot be false to my own self."

This was a surprise for Sayyad Mahmud ; a more forgiving, tranquil soul he had not come across all his life. The criminal, it is needless to say, was acquitted.

This was only one of the many murderous attempts made on the Swami's life. At Karnvas, Rao Karn Singh, a rais of Baroli, a Vaishnavite by creed, who had come to bathe in the Ganges came to Swamiji's *kutiya* accompanied by twelve armed men. He had been deeply incensed by Swamiji's criticisms of Vaishnavism and had come to teach him a lesson.

"Where shall I sit ?" said he in a haughty tone.

"Wherever you like."

"I shall sit where you sit."

"I have no objection" ; said the Swami, and the latter made room for him on his seat.

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"I understand that you denounce the Ganges and Avatars ; take note if you say anything against them in my presence, it will go hard with you."

"What I consider true I shall speak without fear of any person living. How can I attribute powers to the Ganges which no sane man can give credence to ? By the way, what is this mark on your forehead, Rao Sahib ?"

"It is *Shri*—hall-mark of Vaishnavites and those who don't put it on are Chandals."

"Was your father a Vaishnavite ?"

"No."

"The inference is clear."

At this Rao Sahib was beside himself with anger. Laying his hand on the hilt of his sword he cried, "Hold your tongue, or you pay a heavy price."

The Swami stood unmoved, while the Rao with blood-red eyes was all anger and was raining invectives on the inoffensive Sadhu.

"Karn Singh, if you want to fight, this is not the place for it, you had better try your hands against some ruler worth your steel. If you want a discussion, invite your *guru*, and he will find me ready."

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Sword in hand, the Rao rushed at the Swami and was going to strike when the latter wrested it from his hand, pressed it to the ground and broke it into two.

"I am a Sanyasi and would not pay you in the same coin. You may go now, God give you better sense to discriminate between right and wrong."

After Karn Singh had left, many of the people assembled advised Swamiji to report the matter to the police. The Swami thanked them for their solicitude and observed, "If the Rao did not behave like a true Kshatriya, should I too behave unlike a true *Sanyasi*? I am unhurt, the Rao should be wiser after this experience."

This discomfiture, however did not make the Rao wiser, it only added fuel to the fire of his hatred for the Swami. More than once he hired assassins to do away with him but fortunately these attempts were foiled every time. It, however, became known that the Rao was hatching plots against Swamiji; his good sense got the better of his hatred and he left the place.

Swamiji's enemies stooped to the meanest

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devices to end his life. One day when the Swami was delivering a lecture and hundreds of men and women were listening in rapt attention, a Brahmin priest rushed through the assemblage and threw a snake at him and exclaimed in a jubilant tone, "Mahadeva himself will decide today who is right, you or I."

The snake clung to Swamiji's feet. Speedily he got his feet disentangled with a single vigorous movement, crushed its head and spoke to the priest,

"Your God was rather tardy, fortunately I did not follow him. The issue is decided. Go and tell others that they should not deify false gods, but should worship the only truly Glorious Almighty."

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CHAPTER IX

'REBEL' ON WAR-PATH

If his adversaries believed that such measures could deter him from his course of action, they knew not Dayanand. Opposition and abuse served only to stiffen his resolve. Armed with deep erudition, dialectical skill, and, above all, courage that comes with character, he was ready as never before, to denounce the shibboleths and practices of the day and to expose the cry of 'Dharma in Danger.' He realised as no one else did that it was not their Dharma but their purse that had been jeopardised. Why should he fight shy of the campaign when he took his stand on the Vedic rock ? Malpractices which were eating into the vitals of the society must be condemned whatever the cost.

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A great fair was held at Kakora and the Swami preached on the occasion, as usual. A large number of men came to him with the request that he should not run down idolatry and Puranas, but he heeded not. His calm but firm reply was, "What gives pleasure to you has no charm for me. I adore God and God alone and preach the same. This is what has been enjoined by the Vedas. I challenge you to come forward and prove if this is not so." There was none to take up the gauntlet and all went away in dismay.

The leaders of orthodoxy at Farrukhabad took alarm at Dayanand's ruthless campaign against *pauranika* teachings, and called upon Pt. Sri Gopal of Meerut to take up the cudgels against the rebel. A *shastrartha* came off in May 1869. The Pandit quoted a verse from the *Manu Smriti* which according to him enjoined that idols should be worshipped. When the correct meaning of the verse was expounded by the Swami, the Pandit found it hard to uphold his position. He tried to lengthen discussion over the meaning of that verse, but it was becoming increasingly clear to him that he was

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no match for the erudite Swami, and he came back without being able to hold his own.

The supporters of the Pandit found it hard to swallow the humiliation and hurried him off to Kashi whence he should make haste to obtain a verdict in favour of idol-worship. Already a *vyavastha* had been prepared by the Pandits of Kashi when of late, a movement against idol-worship had started in the South, and Pt. Sri Gopal returned with a copy of the said document. The document contained no quotations from the Vedas authorising idol-worship and ended with spurious attacks on Swami Dayanand. It was, however, a rare treasure for Pt. Sri Gopal, who hastened to send a copy of it to Swamiji. It only excited the latter's laughter and he could not help observing, "This gives me an idea of the learning of Kashi, I shall know more of it, when I reach there."

Sri Gopal created stir in the neighbourhood by nailing the document to a pole near the place where Swamiji was putting up, and hoisted his so-called '*dharma dhwaja*'! When the Pandit was asked to go to Swamiji's place for *shastrartha*, he replied, 'If I go there, I shall be defeated, and if the Swami comes to me, he will be

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defeated. The Swami's abode is under the influence of some charm." The Swami's reply to those who went to him was, "Is it any use holding discussion with a man who cannot so much as tell the masculine from the feminine gender ?"

Sri Gopal's discomfiture did not silence the orthodox people of Farrukhabad and they sent for Pt. Haldar Ojha from Kanpur. The discussion came off on June, 19, 1869, the subject being idol-worship. Haldar who was a *tantrika* and believed in taking wine, gratification of lower passions, etc., for the attainment of *mukti*, made efforts to side-track the issue by starting a defence of drinking. He began quoting chapter and verse in support of his case, but finding that he could not hold his own, he drifted into various matters that had absolutely no bearing on the subject under discussion. The *shastrartha* lasted till one o'clock in the night and was resumed the next evening. Despite his tangential flight from the matter in hand, he felt himself in a quandary over a grammatical point. Not able to stand the humiliation, he fainted and was taken away from the meeting in that sorry state.

Haldar Ojha had the audacity to meet

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Swamiji again in a similar discussion at Kanpur on July 31, 1869, but fared no better. It was a huge crowd that assembled to hear the *shastrartha* numbering no less than twenty thousand persons. Mr. Thaine, Assistant Collector who was a Sanskrit scholar of no mean repute was in the chair. As usual Ojha tried to beat about the bush, but Swamiji would not let him and he had to come to the point. It did not take Swamiji long to silence him with his unanswerable arguments.

"What do you believe in ?" asked Thaine of Swamiji.

"In God alone."

"Then why do you perform *agnihotra* and worship fire ?"

"We don't worship fire. The material thrown into the fire is transformed into gaseous state and purifies the air."

Mr Thaine, then took his hat and stick and left the meeting. The audience dispersed with shouts of 'Victory to Haldar—Hail Mother Ganges !' The editor of a local newspaper *Shola-i-Toor* was prevailed upon to publish an account of the discussion which should be adverse to Swamiji. It was read out to him and with his

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characteristic calmness and dignity he took no notice of it. Not so his followers and well-wishers who felt hurt at the wrong that had been done to their guru, and they called on Mr. Thaine and requested him to let them know if he considered the account that had been published fair and just. Thereupon he wrote his own decision and handed it over to them. It reads thus :—

Gentlemen : At the time in question I decided in favour of Dayanand Saraswati, Faqir, and I believe his arguments are in accordance with the Vedas. I think he won the day. If you wish it, I will give you my reasons for my decision in a few days.

Yours obediently,
B. W. THAINE.

Cawnpore.
7th August, 1869.

Nothing more was needed to damn Haldar. But to add to his chagrin, many worshippers of idols threw their idols in the bazaars or into the river and testified thereby to the truth of Swamiji's doctrines

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CHAPTER X

STORMING THE CITADEL

From Kanpur Swamiji proceeded to Banaras, the great centre of Sanskrit learning and the citadel of orthodoxy. Dayanand felt that his work was not complete unless he dealt a blow to this city of myth and marvel. Equipped with naught, but his learning and his character, this solitary monk was thinking of assaulting this powerful seat of learning, with no less a personage than the Maharaja himself to guard its idolatrous beliefs and its iniquitous trade. But nothing could daunt our hero, he took his stand on the solid rock of Truth and no fear of worldly opposition or power could deter him from doing what he considered to be right. He dared to believe and to act.

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The fame of this 'iconoclast' had preceded him, his discussions at Farrukhabad and Kanpur had made him known in all seats of orthodoxy in India—particularly Banaras. His arrival caused a consternation among the pandits. Many a person flocked to the place where he was staying, some out of curiosity, some to spite him and thus to feed their hate, others to listen to his arguments. Such was the effect of his eloquence that many 'who came to scoff remained to pray.' Swamiji, who was anxious to bring matters to a head, one day wrote down a question in connection with a subject, dealt with in the *Mahabhashya* and sent the slip to the well-known pandit of Banaras—Raja Ram Shastri. The reply of the pandit was "Let the knife be placed between us, if I satisfy you, I will cut off your nose, if not, you may cut off mine." When this answer reached Swamiji, he laughed and said, "Two knives instead of one, if that be your wish. Let *shastras* weapons) serve as substitutes for *shastras* (scriptures) if these suit you better."

Swamiji's fearless denunciation of idol-worship aroused the Maharaja of Kashi to his duties as 'Defender of the Faith,' and he called

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the pandits of Kashi together and impressed upon them the imperative necessity of holding a *shastrartha*, lest the heretical ideas preached by Dayanand should take root in the minds of the people. Monday, November 16, 1869 was fixed by mutual consent as the date of the *shastrartha*. The pandits started mighty preparations to meet their formidable opponent, not only by way of collection of arguments to support their cause but at the same time by rousing the rowdy element of the town to their duty at the hour of need. Victory must be won, by fair means or foul. And what fear had they when the Maharaja was there to back them up ?

It was a tremendous gathering that came to hear the discussion. Swamiji was told by some of his well-wishers that they apprehended foul play, for a large number of hooligans had found their way to the place reserved for speakers, in spite of the orders of the *Kotwal* to the contrary. "I am prepared to risk my life rather than be false to God. I have nothing to fear, for I live for my *Ishwara* and my *Dharma*," replied Swamiji, and he repaired to the meeting, as calm as ever. In order to

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overawe him, it had been arranged that the pandits who were to participate in the discussion should come in a triumphal procession, and as soon as they entered, there were loud shouts of joy. The Maharaja of Kashi, who was to preside, soon followed. The pandits rose and gave him their blessing. From the start Swamiji felt that proper treatment was not being meted out to his supporters so much so that they were not allowed to sit by him. But he did not protest and allowed the Maharaja and the pandits to please themselves. He inquired if the Vedas had been brought, and was told that since the pandits knew the Vedas by heart it was felt unnecessary to bring them.

Pt. Tara Charan opened the discussion, but could not stand Swamiji's onslaughts for long. Swami Vishuddhanand followed, and leaving the subject under discussion, began to talk about the revealed character of the Vedas. Swamiji answered his questions once or twice but pointed out to him that he was getting irrelevant during the course of the discussion. Swamiji quoted a passage from an Upanishad the existence of which in the Upanishads all

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the pandits denied in a body. Thereupon the Swami opened the Upanishad and showed them the passage at which they felt crestfallen. Vishuddhanand did not heed Swamiji's remonstrance and the latter felt constrained to beat him on his own ground. Finding his associate cornered, Pt. Balshastri hastened to his rescue, and offered to answer the question over which Vishuddhanand had been silenced, but was nonplussed. The pandits then played an ignominious ruse, which as later events disclosed was pre-concerted. One pandit, Madhavacharya by name, took out a few leaves from a manuscript which he said was a copy of the *Veda Samhita* and directed his attention to a passage in that book which sanctioned idol-worship. Having absolutely no idea of his intention Swamiji began to examine the contents of the book. He had hardly done so for two minutes when Vishuddhanand, his associate and the Maharaja of Kashi, stood up. Cries of 'Dayanand defeated, Dayanand defeated,' were raised and the meeting ended in a pandemonium. The voice of Dayanand was drowned in the midst of confusion that ensued. Some scoundrels began to throw

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stones and brickbats at the Swami, but thanks to Kotwal Raghunath Das they were soon dispersed. Unruffled he stood in the midst of that rowdyism wondering at the disgraceful trick that had been played on him. A marble statue could not be less moved by the raging wrath of the crowd. "I had fondly hoped that in the presence of many learned men there would be absolute fairness. The way they have behaved is highly unjust and unfair," remarked he. That his adverasaries had felt the necessity of resorting to such unenviable methods was a proof incontrovertible of his moral triumph.

The pandits did not delay in proclaiming this victory from the housetops, and in advertising this fact in newspapers. Truth cannot be suppressed for long, however, and Dayanand was not to be put down by such high.handedness and mischief. He stayed on at Kashi, exposed the ruse that had been played on him, and went on preaching his doctrines of challenging the pandits to a fair fight. But none came forward.

The following appeared in the *Hindu Patriot* of 17th January 1870, in connection with this *shastrartha* :—

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"The stronghold of Hindu idolatry and bigotry which, according to Hindu mythology stands on the trident of Shiva, and is, therefore, not liable to the influence of earthquakes, has lately been shaken to its foundation by the appearance of a sage from Gujarat. The name of this great personage is Dayanand Saraswati. He has come with the avowed object of giving a death-blow to the Hindu system of worship. He considers the Vedas to be the only books worthy of regard, and styles the Puranas as cunningly devised fables, the inventions of some shrewd Brahmins in a later period for the subservience of their selfish motives. The Vedas, says he, entirely ignore idol-worship, and he challenges the pandits and great men of Banaras to meet him in argument. Some time ago, the Maharaja of Ram Nagar held a meeting in which he invited the great pandits and *elite* of Banaras. A curious and protracted logomachy took place between Dayanand Saraswati and the pandits, but the latter notwithstanding their boasted learning and deep insight into the *Shastras* met with a signal discomfiture. Finding it impossible to overcome the greatman by a regular discussion the pandits resorted to the

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adoption of a sinister course to subserve their purpose. They made over to the sage an extract from the Puranas that savoured of idolatry, saying that it is the text from the Vedas. The latter was pondering over it, when the host of pandits, headed by the Maharaja himself, clapped their hands, signifying the defeat of the great pandit in the religious warfare. Though mortified greatly at the unmanly conduct and bad treatment of the Maharaja, Dayanand Swami has not lost courage. He is still waging the religious contest with more earnestness than ever. Though alone, he stands undaunted in the midst of a host of opponents. He has the shield of Truth to protect him, and his banner of victory is waved in the air. The pandit has lately published a pamphlet, entitled the *Satya Dharma Vichara*, containing particulars of the religious contest above alluded to, and has issued a circular calling on the pandits of Banaras to show the part of the Vedas which sanction idol-worship. No one has ventured to make his appearance."

It is significant, that several years after this contest when Dayanand visited Banaras, on his return from Bombay, the Maharaja sent him

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word that he should grace him with a visit. Swamiji did not like to go but when the request was repeated the next day, and an officer turned up with a carriage, Swamiji agreed. He was received respectfully and seated on the royal throne. The Maharaja put a garland of flowers round his neck, paid his respects and remarked, "I have been worshipping idols since long, and therefore I had the painful duty of opposing you. If my conduct at the time of *shastrartha* annoyed you in any way, I beg your pardon."

Another pertinent fact needs being told. One Goswami Ghanashyam Das went from Multan to Banaras where he met Balshastri and questioned him as to who had won at the well-known Shastrartha of Banaras. "We are householders, and Dayanand a *sanyasi*, deserving respect at our hands ; there is no meaning in holding a discussion with him," replied Balshastri.

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CHAPTER XI
REBEL OR REDEEMER?

The learning of Banaras had not the patience to hear Dayanand out. He had been hooted down and abused, but the echo of this combat spread throughout the country, and Dayanand's name became famous all over India. The pandits of Banaras were hugging the chains that bound them. They had got so used to darkness that lights seemed to hurt their eyes. But not so the whole of India. There were some who dared to think and see for themselves. They had begun to realise that Dayanand was not only a destroyer but a builder as well, not merely a rebel but a redeemer too.

From Banaras, Swami Dayanand went to Allahabad where the Kumbha Fair was going to be held. People flocked to hear his lectures

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on idol-worship and the ideas of many a hearer underwent a radical change. After staying for about a month at Allahabad, the Swami proceeded to Mirzapur, where he remained for about two months. Here too, his speeches had a wholesome effect. Many pandits gave up idol-worship, and began performing *Sandhya* regularly. In May 1870, the Swami returned to Banaras and continued his exposition of Vedic truths. The Maharajas of Bharatpur, Riwan, and Nairwa paid a visit to the Swami during his stay at Banaras, this time. They were highly pleased to hear him talk on the existence of God.

After a tour along the banks of the Ganges, lasting about a year, the Swami was again back at Kashi in March 1872, and stayed there for about a month. He then went to Monghyr and thence to Bhagalpore. Here a Bengali Christian gentleman hearing his *updesha* burst into tears and said, "Swamiji, had I found anyone like yourself a score of years earlier to remove my doubts, I would never have permitted myself to be torn from my faith and my kith and kin. In those days I went to many a pandit, but none could answer my questions to my satisfaction." It was here that the Maharaja of Burdwan paid him a visit, and begged him

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to stay in his palace, but the latter did not agree. After two month's stay at Bhagalpore, the Swami left for Calcutta in December 1872.

As soon as it was known that the great reformer was in Calcutta, educated people of all creeds flocked to him in large numbers. The Brahma Samaj there was wielding a powerful influence over the minds of the educated public on account of the work of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Keshub Chandra Sen. The interest of the people in India's ancient culture had already been aroused and Swamiji discerned among those who came to him a genuine keenness and a true spirit of inquiry. Swamiji was busy, the whole day, lecturing on religious topics and answering questions from inquirers who were pouring in at all hours. To quote a Bengali paper of those days, "His power of lecturing, his skill in discussion, and his thorough acquaintance with the Shastras astonished everyone. Crowds of men would approach him in the capacity of true inquirers, and obtaining satisfactory answers to their questions, go away to their homes. They had never heard before any of their countrymen, not conversant with the English language, declare to them in connection with Dharma and the Samaj, faith

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so utterly devoid of partiality."

Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, Babu Keshub Chandra Sen, Raja Surendra Nath Mohan Tagore, Pt. Mahesh Chandra Nyaya-ratna and Pt. Tara Nath Tarka Vachaspati, were among the most remarkable men who called on Swamiji quite frequently during his stay at Calcutta. The first meeting of Swamiji and Babu Keshub Chandra Sen is not without interest. The latter saw Swamiji, and had a talk with him, without as much as disclosing his identity. After the conversation was over, he asked,

"By the way, have you seen Babu Keshub Chandra ?"

"Yes."

"But he was not here, all these days."

"I have seen him all the same."

"How could you, when he was not in Calcutta ?"

"I have met him just now. You yourself are Babu Keshub."

"How do you happen to recognise me ?"

"No other person but Keshub could talk the way you have talked."

The two reformers met quite often and held long discussions. With all his differences,

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Babuji had come to have a genuine regard for Dayanand. At one of such meetings Babu Keshub remarked, "How sad that a Vedic scholar like yourself should be ignorant of English, otherwise what a suitable companion you would make me in my contemplated visit to England." Swamiji laughed and said, "Equally deplorable is the fact that Babuji, master of a foreign tongue should be trying to resuscitate a culture of which he knew but little, and should talk to his people in a language of which they knew but little."

It was at Babu Keshub's suggestion that Swami Dayanand felt that he should discontinue lecturing in Sanskrit. Very few could understand him speaking in Sanskrit, and he was not sure that the interpreters interpreted him quite faithfully. He made up his mind that, henceforth his public lectures would be in *Arya Bhasha* (Hindi) as far as possible. He also took to wearing clothes at the instance of Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar.

Swamiji deeply deplored the want of suitable institutions for teaching Sanskrit. One day, he remarked to a disciple of his, Baldev Prasad by name, "Baldev, the sons of the rich

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are attracted by English and Persian, and the destitute remain to receive instruction in Sanskrit. How can society go ahead ?" Among other things, one of Swamiji's objects in visiting Calcutta was to found there a *pathashala* on true Vedic lines. But the idea did not materialise for want of practical support.

It would not be out of place to put down the impressions of a Bengali youth, Manmatha Nath Chowdhri, B.A., who was so much struck by Swamiji's learned discourses, and purity of character that he began to live with him. He wrote all this in 1900 in a letter to Devendra Babu, the well-known biographer of Swamiji. "Since I had occasions to watch the activities of Swamiji, at close quarters, I know certain things which others could not. Swamiji used to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning and would start Yoga which would ordinarily continue for three hours. From 9 to 12 he would receive visitors whose queries he kept on answering. At 12 he would take his midday meals, and then from 1 P.M. to 9 P. M. he would keep discussing religious topics with people who were constantly coming to him. Every moment I felt that he was born with a mission."

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"I have seldom come across a man with greater independence of character. If anybody really loved democracy, it was Swamiji. Many *rajas* used to call on him and perhaps expected differential treatment, but he treated all alike. He was a model of selfless patriotism and loftiness of character."

From Calcutta, Swamiji proceeded to Hoogly where he delivered several lectures. Here he had a discussion with Pandit Tara Charan whom he had silenced in *Kashi-Shastrartha* at the very outset. He fared no better now, and finding himself hard pressed exclaimed desperately, "All worship is farcical." Swamiji asked Pandit Tara Charan in private why he advocated idol-worship when he did not believe in it. He said in plain words, "I quite agree with you that idol-worship is not warranted by the Vedas nor do I believe in it. But if I say that openly, my livelihood will be jeopardised. Maharaja Sahib will give me the sack, the day I openly avow what I have in my heart."

Leaving Hoogly, Swamiji went to Bhagalpur where he stayed for a month and then left for Patna. From Patna he proceeded to Chhapra. The orthodox section of Chhapra approached one Pandit Jagannath to hold a discussion with

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Swamiji. He declined, for in case he saw the face of Dayanand, the *nastika*, he would have to atone for his guilt. Swamiji suggested a way out of the difficulty—a curtain might be hung between them. Pandit Jagannath had no course left but to take up the challenge. A screen was actually hung between them and the discussion began. Swamiji put him some questions in Sanskrit from the *Smritis*, but Pandit Jagannath broke down at the outset, so much so that he could not speak a sentence of correct Sanskrit, and refused to proceed with the *Shastrartha*. Thereafter Swamiji visited Dumraon, Kashi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Farrukhabad, Aligarh, Mathura, Brindaban and Allahabad. His discourses at each place attracted large audiences and carried conviction to the minds of those present. When he proved to them the sublimity of the original Aryan Faith, and how degeneration had set in chiefly on account of the self-seeking priesthood, and then exhorted them to restore it to its pristine purity, there was not a soul present but was filled with emotion.

Swamiji's tour of Bengal and U. P. was complete. Orthodoxy had received a rude shaking. Dayanand was the talk of the day. Those who had eyes to see saw in his revolt India's redemption.

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CHAPTER XII

BACK TO SAURASHTRA AT LAST !

On the 26th of October, 1874, Swamiji was in Bombay. He was back to the land of Saurashtra at last. He had left this land as Mool Shankar—an obscure runaway from home, a quarter of a century before, and returned as Dayanand Saraswati—a socio-religious reformer unequalled in scholarship and saintliness. The reader is already familiar with the stages of this evolution. His wanderings in quest of soul's homeland, the hardships he suffered, the disciplined life he led, the assiduity with which he studied the ancient lore—these need no recapitulation. They only go to prove the truth of the oft-quoted verse :

> The heights by great men reached and kept
> Were not attained by sudden flight.
> But they, while their companions slept
> Were toiling upwards in the night.

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Swamiji's arrival created a stir in the city. Hundreds of men and women came to have his *darshana* and to hear him. The orthodox pandits scented danger and started propaganda to stop people from going to Swamiji. Some remarked that he was a government spy, others that he was a Christian in the garb of a Hindu *sanyasi*, others to turn the authorities against him had the audacity to say that he was an agent of Nana Sahib—the great rebel in the Indian Mutiny. Swamiji did not feel perturbed at these fabrications, because he knew that his onslaughts on Pauranic faith were bound to provoke the wrath of self-seeking priests who would protect their interests by fair means or foul.

Swamiji's denunciation of the evil practices held sacred by Vallabhacharies—a powerful Vaishnava sect—created a flurry among the leaders of that sect. One of them Goswami Jiwanji, mad in his fanaticism determined to do away with the reformer. He hired some ruffians who were constantly following Swamiji, but got no opportunity for assault. This method not succeeding, Jiwanji stooped to another. He promised Baldev Singh, Swamiji's cook, a reward of Rs. 1000, if he should poison his master's food. As an earnest he gave him five

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rupees and some sweets, and by way of assurance handed him a note confirming the reward in the event of accomplishment of his purpose. Swamiji got a clue to this affair, and when the servant returned, he questioned him ;

"Did you go to the temple of Gokuliyas ?"

"Yes, please."

"What have you been offered ?"

"Rs. 5 in cash, 5 seers of sweets, and this promise of Rs. 1,000, If I kill you."

"I have been poisoned many a time. If I have survived these attempts, I am going to outlive this one too."

"I dare not administer poison to anybody, particularly to you, who are doing so much for humanity."

The merciful Swami contented himself with having the sweets thrown away, and the note torn. He warned the servant not to be led astray by such tempters.

It was in Bombay that the idea of establishing a permanent organisation to carry on the work of social regeneration on Vedic lines among Hindus found a practical shape. The work of reform undertaken by the Brahma Samaj in Calcutta, and that of Prarthana Samaj in

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Bombay should have suggested to Swamiji and his followers that no permanent good could be achieved without the establishment of a regularly organised body. Before this idea finally materialised, spasmodic efforts had already been made in this direction in Rajkot to which place Swamiji had gone for a few days, and in Bombay itself during the early stages of Swamiji's stay. Whether it was for want of moral courage required for standing against the common view or the fear of authorities, the matter did not receive much public attention. It was in February, 1875, that serious efforts were set afoot in this direction. Principles to serve as the basis of this organisation—Arya Samaj as it was named—and rules of conduct for members were discussed at several sittings. When they had been amended and modified and approved by Swamiji, it was decided to announce them at a public meeting. Swamiji would not sacrifice his principles for the sake of worldly gain or show. When the rules were under discussion, one of his important supporters, Raj Krishna, suggested that in some shape *Advaita* be incorporated in the *niyamas*. It could be given up later on, but it was necessary in the beginning so as to bring in large numbers to their fold. Swamiji's reply was characteristic of him. "Shall untruth be

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the basis of Arya Samaj ? This cannot be." This reply so much irritated Raj Krishna, that he gave up all connection with Swamiji, and started dissuading people from joining the Arya Samaj. Perhaps he believed that without his co-operation, the scheme would die out, but the admirers of Swamiji, heeding neither opposition nor public censure held a public meeting on 10th April, 1875, under the presidency of Mr. Girdhari Lal Dayal Das Kothari, B.A., LL.B., in the garden of Dr. Manak Ji. The Arya Samaj was duly established, and the following principles accepted : –

1. The establishment of Arya Samaj is essential in the interest of society.

2. The Arya Samaj shall regard the Vedas as absolutely authoritative. For purposes of testimony, for the understanding of the Vedas and for ascertaining the history of ancient Aryans all the four Brahmanas, Shatapatha, etc., the Vedangas, the four Upavedas, the six Darshanas, and 1,127 Shakhas or exposition of the Vedas, shall, by virtue of their being ancient and recognised works of Rishis, be also regarded as secondarily authoritative, in so far only as their teaching is in accord with that of the Vedas.

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3. There shall be a principal Arya Samaj in each province and the other Arya Samajs shall be its branches, all connected with one another.

4. The Branch Samajas shall conform to and follow as model the principal Samaj.

5. The principal Samaj shall possess various Vedic works in Sanskrit and Aryabhasha (Hindi) for the dissemination of true knowledge, and it shall issue a weekly paper under the name of 'Arya Prakasha,' also an exponent of the Vedic teachings. The papers and the books shall be patronised by all the Samajas.

6. Every Samaj shall have a President and a Secretary. Other men and women shall be members thereof.

7. The President shall be responsible for the maintenance of the integrity and for the promotion of well-being of the Samaj, while the Secretary shall reply to all letters and shall keep a record of the members of the Samaj.

8. The members of the Samaj shall be truthful, straightforward, pure and philanthropic.

9. Whatever leisure a member gets from household work, he shall devote the same to the

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good of the Samaj with greater earnestness than that displayed in the discharge of household duties. Those that have no family to care for should, in particular, be always striving to promote the well-being of the body.

10. Every eighth day, the President, the Secretary and other members of the Samaj, shall come together in the Samaj mandir, giving precedence to punctual attendance to everything else.

11. Having assembled together, they should be calm and composed in their minds, and in a spirit of love and free from bias, they may ask questions and obtain answers from each other. This done, they shall sing the hymns of the Sama Veda in praise of God, and songs bearing on true Dharma, righteous conduct and right teaching, to the accompaniment of musical instruments. And the *mantras* shall be commented upon, and explained and lectures delivered on similar topics. After this, there shall be music again, to be followed by interpretation of *mantras* and speeches as before and so on in succession.

12. Every member shall cheerfully contribute a hundredth part of the money he has

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earned honestly, and with the sweat of his brow, towards the funds of the Samaj, the *Arya Vidylaya*, and the *Arya Prakasha* paper. If he contributes more, the greater shall be his reward. The money thus contributed shall be used for the purposes specified and in no other way.

13. The more an individual bestirs himself in bringing income to the Samaj for the purposes specified, and for the diffusion of a knowledge of the teachings of the Arya Samaj, the more honour shall he receive for his energy and zeal.

14. The Samaj shall do *stuti*, *prarthana*, and *upasana* (*i.e.*, shall glorify, pray to and hold communion with the one only God) in the manner commanded by the Vedas. To speak of God as the Being who is formless, almighty, just, infinite, immutable, enternal, incomparable, merciful, the father of all, the mother of the entire universe, all-supporting, the lord of all, possessing the attributes of truth, intelligence, happiness, and so on, as all pervading and the knower of all hearts, indestructible, deathless, everlasting, pure and conscious, as inherently in a state of salvation, to speak of Him as endowed with such and similar other qualities

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and attributes is to do his *stuti* (*i.e.*, to glorify and praise Him). Asking His help in all righteous undertakings is identical with *prarthana* (*i.e.*, praying to Him) and to become absorbed in the contemplation of His Essence, which is absolute Happiness, is termed *upasana* (*i.e.*, holding communion with Him). The aforesaid Being, possessing the attributes of incorporeity, etc., shall alone be adored and naught besides.

15. The Samaj shall perform Vedic Sanskaras, such as *anyteshti*, etc.

16. The Vedas and the ancient Arsha Granthas, shall be studied and taught in the Arya Vidyalaya, and true and right training calculated to improve males and females alone shall be imparted on Vedic lines.

17. In the interests of the country, two kinds of reform shall receive thorough attention in the Samaj, spiritual and temporal. There shall be uplifting in these two directions, for the promotion of purity ; indeed reform conducive to the welfare of entire mankind shall be undertaken by the Samaj.

18. The Samaj shall believe in what is right and just only, *i.e.*, in the true Vedic Dharma,

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destitute of all element of partiality, and standing the crucial test of all the *pramaṇas*—ocular demonstration and so forth. It shall never have faith in anything else, so far as possible.

19. The Samaj shall send learned men of approved character everywhere to preach truth.

20. In the interests of education of both males and females, separate schools shall be established, if possible in all places. In the seminaries for females the work of teaching and that of serving the students shall be carried on by females only and in the schools for males, the responsibility for doing the same shall be with males. Never shall this rule be infringed.

21. The school shall be looked after and maintained as the President of the Samaj shall direct.

22. The President and other members of the Samaj shall, for the maintenance of mutual goodwill, keep their minds free from all feelings of pride, wilfulness, hate, anger, etc., and divested of such vices, they shall, being free of enmity and pure of heart, love one another, even as each loves his own self.

23. When deliberating on a subject, that which has been, as the fruit of this deliberation,

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ascertained to be in thorough accord with the principles of justice and universal benevolence and absolutely true, the same shall be made known to the members and believed in by them. Acting thus is termed rising above bias or prejudice.

24. He who conforms his conduct to the principles specified, and is righteous and endowed with true virtues, the same shall be admitted to the superior order of the Arya Samaj, while who is otherwise than this shall belong to the ordinary cadre of the Samaj. But the individual who openly appears to be utterly depraved and debased, shall be expelled from the Samaj. Such a step, however, shall not be dictated by prejudice, on the contrary both the things specified shall be done after due deliberation, by the exalted members of the Samaj and not otherwise.

25. The President and other *sabhasads* of the Samaj shall ever strive, to the utmost of their power, to look after and improve the Arya Samaj, the *Arya Vidyalaya*, the *Arya Prakasha* paper, and the finances of the Samaj.

26. So long as an Arya Samajist can get a brother Arya Samajist to employ or to serve him,

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so long he should not employ or get any one else to serve him The relations in existence between these two should be the relations that ought to subsist between master and servant.

27. Whenever an occasion for making a donation arises, as for instance, in connection with a marriage, the birth of a son, the realisation of a fortune, or a death in the family and so on, the Arya Samajist concerned shall be expected to make donation on such an occasion. No act is more meritorious, and the members shall always bear this fact in mind.

28. Whenever an addition is made to the principles or rules above laid down, or whenever any of these is altered or amended, such an addition, alteration or amendment shall invariably be the result of thorough deliberation on the subject by the exalted *sabhasads* of the Samaj, and the nature of the same shall be previously made known to all the members.

During the tour in the Punjab, two years later, Swamiji recast these rules, but one cannot ignore the historical importance of the above principles and bye-laws. It was so ordained that the society intended to perpetuate the work of Swamiji should have its birth in

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Saurashtra—the land of his birth—which, impelled from within, Mool Shankar had left as a boy. He had discarded his filial duty in response to a call for higher duty. According to some he committed a sin, that of ingratitude to his parents. If it was a sin at all, none could have atoned better for it ; his noble expiation is a matter of history. Nobody, however, has cared to remark that the Buddha was untrue to his wife and newly-born babe, when he renounced worldly life in search of Truth.

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CHAPTER XIII

IN THE LAND OF FIVE RIVERS

From Bombay Swamiji proceeded to Farrukhabad and thence to Banaras. Passing some time at Jaunpur and Ayodhya, he left for Lucknow towards the close of October, 1876. Hearing of the Imperial Darbar to be held at Delhi, he repaired there, feeling that the function would provide him a good opportunity to discuss things with the rulers of Native States and leaders of society who might be present there. The rulers and chiefs who were preoccupied with other matters had no time to attend to Swamiji, and under the circumstances, he convened a meeting of several men of light and leading belonging to different communities to discuss and explore avenues of co-operation in the work of social and political

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reform. This meeting was attended by Babu Navin Chandra Roy, B. Keshub Chandra Sen, Munshi Indar Mani of Muradabad, B. Harish Chandra Chintamani, B. Kanayya Lal Alakh-dhari and Sir Sayyad Ahmed Khan. Swamiji proposed that they should have the same set of principles to believe in, and should work on the same lines, but those present could not see how religious differences could be got over. Swamiji's efforts in this direction, therefore, proved abortive.

Thwarted thus, Swamiji went to Chandpur, where a great conference of religions was going to be held with a view to ascertaining the truth regarding Dharma. Rev. Mr. Scott and Rev. Mr. Parker represented Christianity, while Maulvi Mohd. Kasim and Syed Abdul Mansoor came as representatives of Islam. It was suggested to Swamiji that the Hindus and Moslems should combine and unitedly expose Christianity but he rejected the suggestion, saying "The proper thing is that no one in this conference should do anything calculated to harm others. How beneficial will it be if the *maulvis*, missionaries and ourselves should meet in love and peace and investigate the truth." Every moment of his life Swamiji felt that the libera-

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tion of humanity lay in resuscitation of Vedic ideals, and in upholding his position he had sometimes the painful duty of exposing false creeds, but it would be wrong to think that he was intolerant and hated those who professed faiths different from his own. This is absolutely clear from what he said at the beginning of his speech in this conference : "No one should think of victory or defeat, for it behoves all good men to see that truth prevails. Such remarks as 'the *padaris* are wrong' or that 'the Muhammadans are false' are apt to lead to bickerings and should be avoided. Wise people should according to their knowledge, promulgate truth and refute untruth in language that should not harm the feelings of others. They should avoid speaking ill of one another, and making insinuations like 'I am victorious and you are defeated.' All should give up prejudice, and speak out the truth. No one should, therefore, employ harsh words." The conference lasted for some days. Swamiji created a very good impression by his scholarship and logic, but his hope that the Vedic *truths* should be accepted by those whom he tried to convince by the force of his arguments was as unfulfilled as ever. Bigotry leaves no

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room for conviction.

After the conference, Swamiji accompanied by Munshi Kanayya Lal Alakhdari, left for Ludhiana, which he reached on 1st March 1877. Here he stayed for a fortnight. Then he came to Lahore, and put up in Diwan Rattan Chand's garden. His first two lectures were delivered on April 25 and 26 in the Baoli Sahib and were well-attended. The orthodox people were wild with rage, but the educated classes were filled with admiration. Fearing some disturbance, the admirers of Swamiji suggested that he should deliver his lectures in Brahma Samaj Mandir, Anarkali. In these lectures, Swamiji upheld the divine origin of the Vedas and the Transmigration of souls. This upset the Brahma Samajists who do not believe in either. They had believed that Swamiji's visit would add to their strength and were stunned to find that Swamiji had started proving the truth of tenets they did not believe in. At the same time, the Pauranic people pressed Diwan Bhagwan Das, son of Diwan Rattan Chand, to turn the heretical Swami out of his garden. Swamiji was not the man to barter his religion for the privilege of lecturing in Brahma Samaj Mandir or the luxury of staying in Diwan Rattan Chand's garden. His well-

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wishers secured for him a better and more commodious place—Dr. Rahim Khan's Kothi, where arrangements for lectures were also made. The large heartedness of Dr. Rahim Khan may well be judged from the fact that though a Muslim, he acceded to their request without demur. There Swamiji started his lectures on various religious topics. He also answered the questions of inquirers of all communities, who flocked to his place. The response to Swamiji's preachings was much better here, and the enthusiasm of the educated community in particular ran high. They came to look upon him as a Godsent liberator. To quote a contemporary journal "the man has so much of the angel in him, that it is impossible to overpraise him. It is not religious upheaval which this man is desirous of bringing about, he has in view the reformation of the evil customs and usages such as child marriage, etc., which are prevailing in the land. He is above all, an advocate of female education and emancipation, believing that so long as the Indian woman remains ignorant and does not obtain freedom from domestic thraldom, the hope of seeing India make an appreciable progress will never be realised. To be brief, the destruction of ignorance and prejudice from among the nation, the diffusion of knowledge, the

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creation of a national union, and evolving out of this union an all-embracing civilisation which will make the Indian community a model community, is the first and final aim of this man."

Swami Dayanand had been in Lahore for two months, when his followers began to press for the establishment of an Arya Samaj in Lahore. It was felt that the rules framed at Bombay which were principles and bye-laws combined needed revision. The re-casting was done by Swamiji in collaboration with L. Sain Das, L. Jiwan Das, Lala Mul Raj, M.A., District Judge and a few other gentlemen. The *Niyamas* and *Upaniyamas*, as framed were announced at the inaugural meeting of the Arya Samaj held 24th June, 1877, at the Kothi of Dr. Rahim Khan. Later on, these were adopted by the Bombay Samaj and are recognised in all the Arya Samajas in India or outside it, up to the present day. These principles were .—

1. The Primordial Root—The eternal unseen sustainer of all true knowledge and of objects made known by true knowledge—aye of all these in the supreme God.

2. God is personification of Existence, Intelligence and Bliss. He is Formless, Almighty, Just, Benevolent, unborn, Endless and Infinite

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Unchangeable, Beginningless, Incomparable, Support of all, Lord of all, All-pervading, Omniscient and Controller of all from within, Undecaying, Imperishable, Fearless, External, Holy and Maker of the Universe.

3. The Veda is the scripture of true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of every one to learn and teach the Veda, to hear it read and to recite it to others.

4. We should ever be ready to embrace *Truth* and forsake untruth.

5. All acts should be done in accordance with Dharma, deliberating what is right and wrong.

6. The prime object of the Arya Samaj—Vedic Church—is to do good to the world, that is to promote physical, spiritual and social good of every sentient being.

7. Our conduct towards all should be guided by Love, Righteousness and Justice.

8. We should dispel *avidya*—Nescience and promote *vidya*—Science, spiritual and physical.

9. No one should be content with promoting his own good only ; on the contrary, he should look for his good in promoting the good of all.

10. All men should subordinate themselves

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to the laws of society calculated to promote the well-being of all, they should be free in regard to the laws for promoting individual well-being.

When the *Niyamas* were being drafted, the Brahma Samajists suggested that if No. 3 were left out, most of them would join the Arya Samaj. But Swamiji would not agree. Rai Bahadur Mul Raj who rendered considerable help in this drafting suggested that if the clause 'Veda is the scripture of true knowledge,' were modified as 'Veda is the scripture of knowledge,' the rule would become more catholic and there would be no hesitation with regard to its acceptance. Swamiji who believed he had to guide public opinion and not follow it blindly did not set much store by this suggestion. Organisers and founders of societies are generally anxious to be deified or honoured in various ways but nothing was farther from Swamiji's heart than this *gurudom*. At one of the meetings Babu Sarda Prasad Bhattacharya proposed that the title of 'Patron of Arya Samaj' be conferred upon Swamiji. The suggestion met the approval of everybody present, but Swamiji smiled and said, "The word patron suggests '*gurudom*' which I am out to destroy. I don't want to found a new sect and become a *guru* myself. Such titles prove detri-

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mental to the cause itself in the long run." The Babu then suggested that Swamiji should at least accept the title of *Parama Sahayaka*, to which Swamiji's reply was, "If you call me *parama sahayaka*, by what name are you going to call the Almighty. If you insist on putting down my name, put it down as an ordinary *sahayaka*." One day Swamiji arrived in the Arya Samaj meeting when the prayer was going on. Many a member stood up to receive him. When the prayer was over, Swamiji observed, "At the time of prayer when people are holding communion with God, they should not get up to receive anybody however exalted he may be. None in the world is greater than God, and therefore to attend to some other thing in the midst of prayer is as if offering insult to the Almighty." Equally significant is another similar incident. The *upa-niyamas* (bye-laws) of the Arya Samaj were passed on 6th November, 1877. Swamiji happening to be present in the Samaj at the time, the members present requested him to give his opinion on some points. He replied that he had no right to do so, as he was not a member of the *Antaranga Sabha*. And he never gave his opinion till he had been elected a member of the Executive Committee. All these anecdotes

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contain the most valuable lessons for the Arya Samaj. *Gurudom* in course of time becomes as bad as 'idol-worship' which Swamiji so emphatically denounced and a seer as he was, he perceived real danger in allowing himself to be deified. History tells us that societies based on adoration of persons fall a prey to mental thraldom which leads to moral, intellectual as well as spiritual emasculation.

Swamiji paid visits to other important towns of the Punjab, namely, Amritsar, Jullundur, Ferozepur, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Gujrat, Wazirabad, Gujranwala and Multan. In all, he devoted more than a year and a half to his work in the Punjab. Somehow Swamiji had a feeling that in the Punjab he had found a better soil for sowing the seeds of his mission. In spite of his strenuous efforts to propagate Vedic truths in U. P., Bengal and Bombay, the general populace seemed non-chalant, and much success did not seem to attend his work. Here the case was different, his ideas seemed to take root in the minds of the people. There were reasons behind this phenomenon. The Hindus of the Punjab have suffered rigours of frequent invasions the most, and are ever ready to rally round a leader who can arouse them

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out of the stupor of depression and defeatism, remind them of the glory of their race and tell them that there is still hope for them. Moreover, the conservatism and ignorance in which the whole of India was steeped during Muslim rule had received a rude shaking at the hands of Guru Nanak and his successors in the Punjab. They had tried to turn people from stocks and stones towards the worship of the living, loving God, had shown the futility of ceremonial observances to achieve salvation, and had liberated the Hindus from that fatal feeling of inferiority which was eating into the vitals of the society. With acquisition of power by the Sikhs, came corruption and exhaustion, and the followers of the Gurus went back to the observances from which their forefathers had been weaned. It was at such a moment that our hero dawned on this land of Five Rivers, a stagnant pool spread over with a thick layer of dirty green scum. He tried to remove it, let in upon it the light which he symbolised. Some preferred to sleep on, but many flocked to catch a spark of the light that was his.

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CHAPTER XIV

IN THE LAND OF MARTYRS

In July, 1878, Swamiji left the Punjab for the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. In the course of this tour he visited Roorkee, Aligarh, Meerut, Delhi, Ajmer, Dehradun, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Farrukhabad, Mirzapur, Banaras, and Agra. He saw an Arya Samaj established at each of these places to carry on the mission which had started. It was now the wish of the Swami to make the states of Rajputana his sphere of work. The rulers of these states were Hindu by faith and in their veins flowed the blood of Rajputs who had held aloft the banner of Vedic Dharma against overwhelming odds. Here was a land consecrated by the blood of martyrs, which might prove a better soil than the Punjab even.

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Even if one of the potentates of these states became a sincere follower of his, what could he not do with the wealth and power at his command, and if some of them gave up the immoral, undignified and idle life they were leading, and began to look after the welfare of their subjects in right earnest, what immeasurable good they could do to the people entrusted to their care ?

On the 10th of March, 1881, he left Agra for Bharatpur, where he stayed for a fortnight lecturing and preaching during the period of his stay. Thereafter he left for Jaipur, where more than a month was spent. Leaving Jaipur he reached Ajmer, where he delivered as many as 37 lectures during the course of a month and a half. Paying short visits to Massoda and Raipura, Swamiji reached Chittaurgarh late in October, 1881. The Maharana was greatly struck by Swamiji's personality and eloquence. The latter addressed him and his chiefs for some time on the art of Government, particularly emphasising the fact that all the officers to whom the welfare of the state is entrusted should be models of purity and good conduct. The Maharana came to Swamiji many a time, and his faith in the truth of his doctrines grew

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day by day. He expressed his views to this effect one day : "Remember ye chiefs, what people used to say about the true and patriotic Mahatma, and what baseless charges in their ignorance thay laid at his door. If we had not seen him now, the doubts and suspicions which we had come to harbour about him, would never have been removed, indeed more evil ideas regarding him would have taken root in our minds. What reliance in future can be placed on the words of the mischievous individuals who malign people without cause, and what trust can be reposed in the words of the mischievous individuals, who, to serve their selfish ends, deceive their fellowmen ?"

Leaving Chittaur Swamiji arrived at Indore, late in December, 1881. He could not stay long here, as it became necessary for him to leave for Bombay. A break in this sojourn of his in Rajputana was necessitated by circumstances and this lasted for about six months. Col. Olcott of America and Madame Blavatsky of Russia, the founders of Theosophical Society (Society of Seekers after God), were great admirers of Swamiji, so much so that they had chosen to change the title of their society to 'the Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj or Aryavarta.' They carried on correspondence

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with Swamiji for some years, but since they knew nothing of Hindi and Sanskrit, and Swamiji knew little of English, the entire correspondence had to be carried on through Mr. Harish Chandra Chintamani of Bombay. Whether this Harish Chandra purposely kept from Swamiji some fundamental differences of creed between Arya Samaj and Theosophical Society because he considered the association of Westerners a great asset to the Arya Samaj, or he hoped that these differences would vanish in course of time, is not quite certain, but Swamiji came to feel that this connection, however valuable, could not continue, as the Theosophists did not believe in some of the fundamental tenets of the Arya Samaj. It was this that had necessitated his departure to Bombay where he ultimately announced the formal dissociation of the Arya Samaj from the activities of the Theosophists.

Swamiji left Bombay towards the end of June, 1882, and passing through Indore and Rutlam, reached Chittaurgarh, the symbol of chivalry and martyrdom in Indian History. He was accorded a very cordial reception by Maharana Sujjan Singh. After a short stay, he proceeded to Udaipur, the capital of the State. His Highness called on Swamiji morning and

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evening, in the morning generally accompanying him in his walk, and in the evening studying with him. Swamiji instructed the Maharana in *Darshanas*, *Manusmriti* and *Mahabharata* in the presence of his trusted chiefs. He also initiated the Maharana into *upasana*. The result of all this was that before long, the Maharana was a different man, and began to lead a regular, dutiful and disciplined life. One great reform which was introduced in the Mewar State at the instance of Swamiji was the introduction and use of Hindi as a court Language. Swamiji also wished to establish a Vedic Pathshala with a view to giving some permanency to the interests of Arya Samaj. He also conceived the idea of opening a school or college for training the children of the nobility on Vedic lines in the art of government. It is unfortunate that the scheme did not materialise.

It will not be out of place to give here an incident relating to Swamiji's stay at Udaipur, which shows how unbending he was in his devotion to principles. It is said, that the Maharana in the course of his talk suggested to Swamiji to give up denouncing idol-worship as a matter of policy.

"Your Holiness knows that this State is spiritually subject to the Linga Ishwara Mahadeva.

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In case you follow my suggestion, I shall give you the Mahantship of the Mandir which will bring you an annual income of lacs of rupees."

"Neither this petty state nor your petty mandir has power to deviate me from what I consider my duty."

The Maharana was perhaps prepared for this relpy, for he hastened to remark.

"Revered Sir, I was only trying you."

Swamiji brought about a metamorphosis in the life of Ranaji. To quote Pandya Mohan Lal Vishun Lal "The Maharaja, 'through the *upadesha* of Swamiji, was a completely regenerated man.' Ranaji was ever ready to carry out Swamiji's behests, but the latter took good care not to interfere in the internal administration of the State. That added to Maharana's respect for him ; as a matter of fact His Highness respected and revered Swamiji as he really respected and revered no one before. When receiving *upadesha* he would insist on occupying a seat much lower than that of the Swami, but the latter would not permit this, saying, "If I don't show respect to your Highness, how can your subjects respect you as they should ?"

It was at Udaipur that Swamiji established the Paropakarini Sabha (Society for Benevolence)

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and drew up his will which was signed by many chiefs of the Udaipur court. This will had fourteen articles which dealt with the manner in which his property consisting of books, a printing press, and some money given to him by donors, was to be disposed of. The establishment of this Sabha indicates that Swamiji had premonition of his approaching death. This is borne out by Col. Olcott who states that Swamiji repeatedly told him at Meerut that he would never see 1884. The Sabha was to consist of 23 members with Maharaja Sajjan Singh, Ruler of Mewar, as President, Raj Mul Raj, President, Arya Samaj Lahore, as its Vice-President, and included Maharaja of Shahpura, Mahadeva Gobind Ranade, and Raja Jai Kishan Das, C.S.I., of Moradabad. It was to employ the said property in work of public utility.

When Swamiji was about to leave Udaipur, His Highness presented him with an address written with his own hands wherein he said, "Your stay here for eight months has been a matter of great delight to me. I can never repay the debt I owe to you for the instruction I have been receiving at your hands. I would request you to stay here longer, but I cannot

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arrogate to myself the privilege of monopolising you–a great teacher intended to do good to humanity. I, however, hope that you will come again and make me happy."

The Swami reached Shahpura on 9th march 1883, and was received by the official of the Durbar with great respect. On the very day of Swamiji's arrival, the Raja called on him with some chiefs of the state. It was arranged that His Highness would spend three hours daily with Swamiji, two for the study of Shashtras and one for general conversation. Following this plan, the Raja went through the *Manusmriti*, the *Yoga-Sutras*, and a portion of the *Vaisheshika*.

After staying at Shahpura for two months and a half, Swamiji made up his mind to go to Jodhpur. At the moment of parting the Raja presented him with an address wherein he said that he had hoped Swamiji would stay longer to satisfy his spiritual thirst but he could not insist on his stay at the cost of thousands of others whom his personality was likely to benefit. He hoped, however, that Swamiji would repeat his visit to the state and thereby confer on them a boon to which he and his people would eagerly look forward.

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CHAPTER XV

END OF GOD'S GOOD 'LILA'

"The Rajas of states love to surround themselves with all sorts of means for sensual enjoyments. Please take good care to be a little mild and tactful in your denunciations in the State you are going to" said Raja Nahir Singh of Shahpura to Swamiji when the latter was on the point of starting for Jodhpur.

"I don't attempt to hew down the more thorny trees with a nail-cutter, I use the axe," was Swamiji's calm remark.

Some admirers of Swamiji came at the time of parting and remarked :

"It is unsafe for you to go to Jodhpur. The people of that State are mean and unscrupulous. They may not like what you say, and may in their selfishness do you some harm."

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"They might as well use my fingers for candles and yet not deter me from the performance of my duty," was Swamiji's stern reply.

Swamiji was at Jodhpur on 26th May, 1883. A prince had come to receive him and he conducted him to the bungalow of Mian Faizullah Khan—the Prime Minister of the state, where he was to put up.

All was not well with the state of Jodhpur. Corruption and jobbery were the order of the day. The ruler, Maharaja Jaswant Singh, a victim of his evil propensities, was under the sway of an infamous concubine—Nanhi Jan, and her voice was supreme in the affairs of the State. The Prince had no time from his enjoyments and left the entire administration in the hands of Faizullah Khan, who along with his co-religionists was exploiting the state to his heart's content, while the Rajputs–the ruler's own kinsmen watched helplessly. The Maharaja hardly deserved the name of Rajput, and was an unworthy scion of a glorious race.

It was after 15 days of his arrival that the Maharaja paid him a visit. Swamiji began a talk on the 'Duties of Kings' which lasted for three hours, and the Maharaja was extremely pleased with all he heard. At his suggestion, Swamiji

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began a series of lectures to be held every day from 4. P.M. to 6 P.M. During the course of these lectures, he was very unsparing in his exposure of wickedness and jobbery in the State. The Mussalmans of the State were excited beyond measure at his scathing criticism of the Muslim creed. No wonder that one day Faizullah Khan, audaciously enough, threatened Swamiji with the remark : "If it were a Mohamadan Government now, you would not live to preach such things." "If it were so I would set two Rajputs at your heels," was Swamiji's cool reply. One day a muslim youth with his hands on the hilt of his sword interrupted Swamiji in his lecture saying,"Hold your tongue, and criticise not our faith or else I will end your life with this sword."

"Peace, boy ! peace ! you are hardly out of your teens yet, I wonder if you know how to wield your sword or even unsheath it. If I were to feel afraid of such idle threats, I would have given up my work long long ago." The rebuff went home, the boy almost collapsed with shame.

More troublous developments were ahead. One of Swamiji's visits to the royal palace was at an unexpected hour, when Nanhi Jan was sitting with the Maharaja. Coming to know that the Swami was at the gates of the palace he ordered

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the attendants to take the woman away. Finding the band of carriers short of one man, the Maharaja himself put his hand to the palanquin to steady it. But lo ! the Swami was there. Indignant at what he saw going on, he exclaimed :

"A lion in the company of a bitch ! It is no wonder that such associations should result in the birth of dogs. To what depths have Vedic traditions been lowered ? What a sorry spectacle !"

The Maharaja stood dumbfounded, and received this rebuke in silence.

The Swami retraced his steps to his Kothi. In the course of his talks thereafter, he would often remark, "If the Hindu States have not yet been wiped out of existence, it is on account of the purity of Hindu *ranis*. The debauchery of the rulers and the nobles would long have brought about their ruin."

The rebuke which Swamiji had administered to the Maharaja had had its effect. He was remorseful, but his remorse meant Nanhi Jan's loss of prestige and position. It meant the liberation of a victim from her meshes. This 'devil of a fakir,' had come to jeopardise her interests, to stand between her and her lover or, more properly, her slave. He should know what the wrath of a wounded woman could do.

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Shortly after, Swamiji addressed the following letter to Maharaja Pratap Singh :—

Honoured and Valiant Maharana Shri Pratap Singh, Unto you be peace.

(This letter may be shown to Baba Sahib also.)

I have been deeply grieved to find that the ruler of Jodhpur is an indolent man, and that you and Baba Sahib both possess diseased constitutions. You know very well that the welfare of more than sixteen lakhs of people who inhabit this State depends on you three. And yet, you do not pay any heed to the preservation of your health and manliness. How deplorable !

I wish you to listen to me and to improve your daily routine in the light of what I say. If you reform yourselves, you may be able to do good not only to Marwar, but the entire Aryavarta. Competent men like you are not born every day in the world. Unless you attend to what I advise you to do, you can never reform and elevate the land, The longer people like you continue to live, the more useful they prove to the country. It behoves you to seriously think of all this. But, of course, you are at liberty to do as you choose.

DAYANAND SARASWATI.

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What noble patriotism does this letter bespeak! Every line is full of solicitude for the good of the people. But one man's meat is another man's poison. Nanhi Jan read in this letter her doom—a life of wretchedness and misery. She must have revenge at any cost. Her resolve was made. There was no dearth of accomplices to render her all possible help in carrying out her fell object.

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CHAPTER XVI

'THY WILL BE DONE'

It was the 29th of September. The Swami retired to rest after taking his usual draught of milk. He had not slept much when he awoke with a violent pain in his stomach and a feeling to vomit. He threw up matter thrice, and the pain abating a little, he went to sleep again. It was quite late in the morning when he got up, and as soon as he rose, he threw up again. He felt suspicious and sent for Jagannath, his cook.

"Did you tamper with my evening meal ?"

"No sir, I know nothing about it."

"It is no use denying what is so evident, speak the truth," said Swamiji sternly.

The cook stood trembling.

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"I did poison the milk you took last evening. I have committed a sin. What a fool I was to be taken in !" He fell at the feet of the Rishi.

"Jagannath, by my death at this stage my work is left unfinished. You have no idea of the harm you have done to the country. But why blame you ? It was so ordained. Here are a few rupees, which may prove of use to you. Leave this *State* at once, and fly to Nepal, where you may be safe. Tarry not, now. Disappear quietly. Let nobody know what you have done."*

The people near by came to know that Swamiji was ill and sent for a doctor, who administered some medicine to stop vomiting and also allay the patient's thirst. The dreadful pain continued, however, and respiration was getting quicker. Swamiji's calmness was remarkable, it was he alone who could stand the excruciating pain he was suffering with such patience. The Raja learnt of the Swami's illness in the evening and sent the royal physician,

*(Swamiji never disclosed this fact to anybody. It was Jagannath himself, who later on, unburdened his heart to a friend who sent the news to the press.)

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Alimardan Khan. This doctor, it is said, was an accomplice in the concubine's conspiracy.

At any rate, his treatment did not improve matters. The condition of the patient was growing worse, frequent fits of unconsciousness occasioned by purging added to the trouble. Blisters were appearing on the whole body. Doctor Adams came to see Swamiji on the 15th of October, and advised his removal to Mount Abu. The Maharaja could not possibly like this idea; to allow Swamiji to leave his State in such a precarious condition would be the height of folly, and if the worst should happen, it would be a lasting slur on his fair name and that of the State. But Swamiji was inclined to leave Jodhpur and the requests of the Raja had no effect. He accompanied the palanquin of his distinguished guest to some distance, and then with folded hands and eyes full of tears took his leave.

The change of climate did no good. Swamiji was sinking, his hands and feet were always cold. The best medical aid was proving of no avail. His attendants thought of shifting him to Ajmer; he was unwilling but yielded to their repeated requests. At Ajmer he was under the treatment

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of Dr. Lachhman Dass and Hakim Pir Ali. The latter stated that he had been poisoned, and if he had come to Ajmer earlier, very probably the poison could have been got rid of. During the course of a month for which period Swamiji had been ailing, the poison had been absorbed into the system. Dr. Newton, a well-known physician of Ajmer, came next to examine Swamiji, and applied poultice to his chest. The doctor declared that he had seldom come across any man who under such a terrible suffering was so calm. The Swami threw away the poultice saying "it is no use now."

The shades of evening were closing. The Swami got himself shaved and desired Swamis Atmanand and Gopal Giri to be brought to him.

"What is your wish ?"

"None but that you should be restored to health."

"What is left of this mortal frame now ?"

He placed his hand on the head of each in turn, saying :

"Live in peace, performing your duty. Don't lose heart. To meet and then to part is the law of Nature."

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He then cast a look at the admirers who had come from various parts of India to attend on him and started chanting Vedic hymns. It was a glorious moment. His voice did not falter, his pronunciation was sound, and his words unbroken. Before long, he was in a trance. Guru Datt—the well-known agnostic—was there leaning against a wall, lost in the glory of this scene. Death—fearful death—seemed to have lost its fangs in the presence of this superman armed with Divinity. The summons had come, and none was readier to go. Such resignation to the Divine will was an uncommon sight. Guru Datt was a changed man.

The Rishi opened his eyes.

"Merciful and Almighty Lord, such is your will, yea such is your will, and let Thy will be done. What a good 'Lila' didst Thou enact ?"

The Rishi's glorious sojourn in this world of ignorance and misery was over.

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PART II

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CHAPTER XVII

INDIA ! KNOW THYSELF

How difficult it is to appraise the work of a versatile genius like Dayanand ! A saint and a scholar, a socio-religious reformer and an educationist—what branch of human activity was not comprised in his comprehensive programme ! But beneath all this work there is the undercurrent of an idea, which was the mainspring of all his activities—the desire to see India restored to herself. "Know Thyself–India" was his clarion call. He found India ashamed of herself—suffering from an inferiority feeling. He revealed to her her pristine glory, he gave her a vision of a glorious future—only if India would be herself. He found India weltering in the marshes of ignorance, bound by shackles of superstition, let in upon her people the light of his unique know-

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ledge, exhorted them not to hug their chains, advised them to be themselves. Thousands were awakened out of their slumber, millions refused to awake, but were shaken, all the same. They refused to know themselves, the Saviour knew they would have to know themselves if they cared to survive. Let them not be converted by Dayanand, they should be converted by some prototype of his, after his death, if Hinduism had to exist.

"Hinduism has paid the Arya Samaj the highest tribute, that of imitation by stealing its programme." People decry Dayanand, but follow Dayanand's ideas. That is his triumph. The most hostile camps take up the work that he stood for, and still continue to thunder against him. That is his victory. What the Rishi preached has become a part of our life—no wonder if some fail to appreciate the greatness of his achievement. Chroniclers have not done him justice yet. But the sun is bound to emerge resplendent out of the vapours of suspicion, false prestige and intolerance.

Dayanand found India—the so-called educated India being swept by the West. "Know yourselves." the Saviour thundered. Surrender not your souls" he called out to the apes,"your salvation lies not in imitation, but in being yourselves."

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People mocked at him, they called him a fool and a crank. But when to-day the teachings of Gandhi and Tagore, call upon us above all, to be ourselves we feel the seer that Dayanand was. There lies his glory. He saw the Indian problem as very few saw it. "Back to yourselves" was his cry. People said, going back could not be reconciled with moving forward. Dayanand saw no inconsistency in the two, and history has justified his belief.

The Rishi was a symbol of Indian India. He was an Indian to the core. The spirit that breathed in him was essentially indigenous and both in his ideas and his methods he was entirely Aryan. "Though in his breadth of vision and originality of outlook he was so much ahead of his people, he was yet so thoroughly Indian that there was nothing in him which in the remotest degree could be traced to foreign influence." In spite of the great height from which he addressed his people he addressed them as his own. He knew and understood what they were and what they were not, and he wanted them to know what they were and what they were not. His diagnosis was unique, and so was his remedy—the history of the last seventy years is a living testimony to the truth of this fact.

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CHAPTER XVIII
DAYANAND, THE REVIVALIST

A seer as he was, Dayanand felt that it would not do to impose upon the Indian people an outlandish scheme of reform, opposed to their national genius. Knowing that a Hindu is essentially religious, and that the Hindu civilisation is based on religion, he decided to make their ancient religion a lever for their advancement. To him 'reform was revival and revival was reform.' The genius of the old Vedic civilisation had so fully impressed him that his highest ambition and his greatest delight was to revive those good old days which were among the proudest for India. "He seized justly on the Vedas, as the Indian rock of ages, and had the daring conception to build on what his penetrating glance perceived in it a whole nationhood"

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And he was eminently fitted for the fulfilment of this task. Hundreds have talked of Vedic culture, he actually lived it. In his own unique personality he actually recapitulated the Vedic. Life.

India was great till the advent of that ill-fated Great War—the War of Mahabharata. In that Vedic or pre-Mahabharata period, India produced works on philosophy and metaphysics before which the works of Plato and Aristotle, Bacon and Mill pale into insignificance. To quote Schlegel, the well-known German philosopher, "the loftiest European philosophy compared with Oriental realism is like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of a heavenly galaxy. Not only this, but their marvellous intellectual genius formed an avenue in drama, poetry, science and medicine." When political power passed into the hands of Muslims, a period of intellectual degeneration set in; not only was the spirit for fresh effort in this direction stifled, but the significance of the ancient Vedic truths was forgotten. The Vedas became the close preserve of an oligarchy who ceased to read or promulgate their lofty contents, but carried on trade in their name. The orthodox

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pandits preferred to shelter the Vedas in isolation, they seldom allowed them to see the light of day. The Vedas ceased to exist as a living force, a moving spirit; they remained as dead relics of a starving civilisation. Be it said to our shame, that interest in our Shastras was stimulated by Westerners, who finding Vedic culture sublime and beautiful, commenced their study in India and Europe. However mistaken the interpretation of some of these scholars might be, their general appreciation of our ancient lore, could not but have roused some of us to a consciousness of our past glory. When Max Muller remarked, "In the history of the world, the Vedas fill a gap which no literary work in any other language would fill," or when Guigault said, "The *Rigveda* is the most sublime conception of the great highways of humanity," it was but natural, that the hearts of some of the Hindus who had come to look upon the Vedas as vestiges of a dead language should have throbbed with delight. But how disgraceful that foreigners should discover for us the beauties of our ancient culture ?

At this stage, Swami Dayanand appeared as a divine champion of Aryan civilisation and

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Vedic culture—'the most formidable exponent of Vedism ever since the time of Shankar.' Misguided on the one hand by leaders of orthodoxy who tried to put such interpretations on the Vedic texts as suited their selfish interests, and misled on the other by the Westerners whose knowledge of Sanskrit was exceedingly meagre, and whose appreciation of our culture, at best, half-hearted, India badly needed one who could give her the right clues to their ancient wisdom. Dayanand came not a minute too soon. Rightly has Arvindo Ghosh said "In the matter of Vedic interpretation, Dayanand will be honoured as the first discoverer of the right clues. Amidst the chaos and obscurity of old ignorance and age-long misunderstanding, his was the eye of direct vision that pierced to the truth and fastened on that which was essential. He found the key of doors that time had closed, and rent asunder the seals of the imprisoned fountain."

He took his stand on one basic truth, the key-note of his entire activity—that the Vedas alone are the infallible repositories of religious teachings, and other books deserve respect in the same measure only as they conform to the teachings of the Vedas. This in itself was a signal

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service to Hinduism torn as it was by hundreds of creeds based on Sanskrit books, each one of which had come to be looked upon as a scripture. He tried to simplify Hinduism lost in complexities without number and re-asserted the claims of pure monotheism. "He is one—the wise worship Him by many names." Dayanand understood that India had been weakened by worship of the many which is un-Vedic and realised that unity is necessary for India's advance. "Worship one God—bow before ideals and not idols" was his repeated cry. It is a wonder that for spreading this gospel, he was dubbed a '*nastika*'—an atheist. But fortified by his belief in Him—who never forsakes his own—he went on undismayed. He was not prepared to barter his convictions for popularity.

He created a new pride in the nation. When the sublimity of Vedic truths was revealed to the Hindus—timid Hindus, ashamed of their existence, outcastes in the land of their birth—a new spirit began to pulsate in them. They felt they could stand and stand boldly, they could feel proud of their past and hope for the future. They realised that Vedas were no longer the pastoral songs of a barbaric people but the

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root of all knowledge and fountain-head of all that is noble in Hindu culture. The Vedas place before man an ideal of human life which has not been surpassed even with the lapse of centuries. They must, no longer, remain in barren isolation, in the dark, neglected corners of Brahman's houses, they should be read and re-read. "It is the paramount duty of every Arya to learn and teach the Vedas, to hear and preach them." "Take them out of the dreaded archives in which they have laid long, translate them and take their message to every land" that was Dayanand's ideal. It is an ideal in the realisation of which lies the salvation of humanity. The movement of civilisation from East to West has now clearly completed itself. The globe has been circled, and further movement means coming round to East again. It is a commonplace that western psychology, western philosophy and western religious sense are already taking an eastern colour. Values of modern civilsation are being revised. The peace and happiness for which the west cries in spite of its machines and the comforts they have provided could be had nowhere except in the Vedas. Dayanand's thought has had repercussions in the

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West. To quote Edward Carpenter "A new philosophy we can hardly expect or wish for, since indeed the same germinal thought of the Vedic authors comes all the way down history even to Schopenhaur and Whitman, inspiring philosophy after philosophy and religion after religion.....and it is only to-day that science with its huge conquest in the material plane is able to provide for these world-old principles somewhat of a new form and so wonderful a garment and expression as it does."

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CHAPTER XIX

DAYANAND, THE EDUCATIONIST

It was about the year 1868, that Swami Dayanand felt that schools and seminaries were badly needed in the country, and that preaching and holding of discussions though valuable in its own way, had, at best, an ephemeral effect. The establishment of such institutions would serve as a permanent means of enlightenment for the public and thus help him in his work of reform and regeneration. Helped by the donations of a few philanthropic persons, Swamiji started as many as seven schools at various places in U. P. The following rules were in force in these *pathashalas*.

1. No *Vidyarthi* will be admitted till he has first thoroughly learnt his Sandhya.

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2. All *Vidyarthis* shall be instructed in the Vedic *granthas* only, *Ashtadhyayi*, *Mahabhashya* etc.

3. Every *Vidyarthi* shall rise early in the morning and do his Sandhya. He who fails to observe this rule shall forfeit his day-meal, care being taken that he does not go into the village to procure his food. He will get his supper only after he has done his evening Sandhya.

5. No *Vidyarthis* from the mufussil alone shall have food at the expense of Pathshala funds, the local ones providing for themselves.

6. The intelligent and hardworking *Vidyarthis* shall receive special consideration at the hands of the managers, as regards the quality of food, supplied to them.

The students who acquit themselves well in the examination, shall be allowed an extra quantity of *ghee*.

7. All *Vidyarthis* shall make a point of joining daily in *agnihotra*.

It is true these *pathashalas* did not prove a success. Some of the pandits in charge lacked courage of conviction and the spirit that was needed to carry on his educational work in spite of opposition. Swamiji had to attend to

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calls from various places and could not possibly attend to these schools as he wished to. Many students joined simply for the sake of free food and clothing, and consequently the schools had to be closed one after another. But we can gather from the above rules and from the chapter on education of boys and girls in his masterly work—the *Satyartha Prakasha*—his views regarding the important problems of national education. They are a definite contribution to the educational literature of India, and comprise some very useful ideas which the educationists of to-day would do well to draw upon. Lost in the fogs of controversy over the religious doctrines that he preached, his views on education have not received the attention they deserved, except to some extent by the Arya Samajists.

The third chapter of the *Satyartha Prakasha* opens with the lines "It is the highest duty of parents, tutors and relatives to adorn children with good, sound education, nobility of character, refinement of manner, and amiability of temper. The wearing of jewellery adds no beauty to the soul. It only arouses vanity and other lower passions." Swami Dayanand was an exponent of compulsory education of children by the state. "Both state

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and society should make it compulsory upon all to send their children (both male and female) to school after the 5th or 8th year and to keep them there for the period prescribed, *i.e.*, up to the age of 25 for boys and 16 for girls. It should be made a penal offence to keep a child at home after that age--all the scholars should be treated alike in the matter of food, drink, dress, seats, etc. Be they princes or the children of beggars, all should undergo the same discipline. In order to produce the highest type of a socialised and civilised individual, all artificial distinctions of the rich and the poor, the prince and the peasant, the Brahman and the Shudra ought to be levelled up". Dayanand believed that knowledge is the birth-right of every human being and should be denied to none on account of colour or sex. Could there be a more democratic conception of national education than that cited above? While it provides opportunities to the children of the rich for the formation of manly and disciplined character and for protecting them from the temptations which they are generally heir to, it at the same time, affords opportunities to the sons of the poor, to rise to the highest rungs of the social ladder. Worth, not

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birth should determine the position of an individual in a society and the same facilities should be given to the high and the low for their moral and spiritual evolution. Chief's Colleges--repositories of cloistered superiority or relics of the antiquated idea of Divine Rights of Kings--have no place in Dayanand's scheme of education. He also realised the dangers of allowing one particular class or community to monopolise education. The degradation of India was a proof positive of how the Brahman oligarchy had preferred to keep the other people illiterate since they feared that if they acquired knowledge and became enlightened they would expose their corruption and get out of their grips.

"Not a little of current education is miseducation"--says Vaswani. "There is no place for character-building in the modern scheme with the result that generally speaking it has produced bullies or slaves". Dayanand believed that a true and sound system of education should have character-formation as its main objective--it should not aim at producing ill-fed clerks, half-starved teachers and pampered pleaders, it should aim at sending out men. Moral and religious training, therefore, should form the basis of the

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educational superstructure. It is with this idea that Swamiji has observed in the *Satyartha Parkasha* :

"Fathers mothers, and tutors should always give their children and students good counsels and they should also advise them to imbibe their virtues but avoid their vices. Children should always speak the truth, and should never trust a hypocrite or a man of low character. They should obey their parents and tutors in all things that are good. Tutors should help their pupils to revise all that their parents had taught them at home, the Vedic *mantras*, aphorisms, poetical pieces and prose passages, inculcating the love of righteousness, knowledge and good character. They should understand the nature and attributes of God and worship Him accordingly. In the matter of dress and diet also they should so conduct themselves as to gain in health, strength, general behaviour and knowledge. Parents that neglect the education of the child are his veritable enemies. To give their children the highest education possible, to instruct them in the ways of truth, to make them refined in character and manners, in short, to devote all their wealth, body, and mind to accomplish this object, is the paramount duty, the highest virtue

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and the glory of parents."

"Boys and girls, when they attain to the age of eight years should be sent to their respective schools. In no instance should they be placed under the tuition of teachers of low character. Only those persons are qualified to teach who are masters of their art and are imbued with piety. The seminary should be situated in a sequestered place. The boy's school should be at least three miles distant from that of the girls. The tutors and other employees such as servants should in the boy's school, be all of male sex, and in the girl's school of the female sex. Not even a child of five years of the opposite sex should be allowed to enter the school. As long as they are Brahmacharis, the tutors should see that they keep aloof from impurity and thus perfect their knowledge, cultivate amiable dispositions and manners, and gain in strength both of body and mind, and thereby grow in happiness. The school must not be nearer than five miles to a town or village."

Swami Dayanand, all through his life, vehemently declared that the basal rock on which the edifice of moral training can be raised is Brahmacharya, which means simplicity, purity and self-discipline. The emphasis laid on it by him

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is perhaps unparalleled in the history of any other country. He did not believe in the milk-and-water ideas of sexual purity which exist to-day. He believed in rigid chastity and austerity during student life and was definitely opposed to the system of co-education of boys and girls—both on moral and educational grounds. He could not see why persons of different sexes meant for different vocations in life and differing in temperaments and constitutions should be yoked together, but, of course, the more important consideration with him was the former one. He insisted on isolation from the contaminating influences of city-life because that would help in the process of character-formation. If boys have to develop a virile character which at a moment's notice can renounce all the pleasures of the flesh without a pang or sigh of regret, it is necessary that they should remain away from the allurements of city-life—its atmosphere of luxury, indulgence and softness. Moreover away from the pernicious hubbub of busy town-life, the boy living with nature, as it were, would gradually learn to find 'sermons in stones and books in running brooks.' There would pass into his life nature's calm and mystic purity. The green

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of the earth. the flowing stream, the beauty of spring-time, the repose of the morning would all go to mould his life in a way which the town people can hardly appreciate. The conviction is growing on the educationists of to-day that in the interest of character-formation all schools and colleges should be residential and should be away from the towns with their allurements and distractions. We hear many advocating the experiments of open-air schools. Is not all this a vindication of the Aryan ideals of education which Dayanand stood for ?

There is another commendable feature of Dayanand's scheme which the educationist of to-day finds deplorably lacking in present-day education, *i.e.*, personal contact between the teacher and the taught. Dayanand believed that the most formative influence in the school should be the rich personality of the Guru. Through example and personal association, the pupil is bound to catch his spirit and mould his ideals accordingly. The Guru was to be in *loco parentis* to the pupil who, to all intents and purposes, was a member of his family. He collected alms for the teacher, worked at his house, looked after the cattle, brought fire-wood from the forest and rendered other odd services.

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To-day a wide gulf separates the teacher and the taught, the relationship between them is more or less a business contract. No wonder then that the product of our educational institutions is so poor in quality. The students we turn out carry funds of information in their brains, but how easily they bend and break before the hard realities of life for want of stamina and character ?

This was Dayanand's ideal of education, he did not simply preach it, he lived it both as a pupil and as a teacher. He was religious to the core, a Brahmachari without a peer. He served his guru Virajanand with a devotion which is without a parallel What is more inspiring and touching than the last scene of leave-taking. It was on that day that Swami Virajanand demanded the customary fee which in old times every Brahmachari had to pay to his guru on the day of leave-taking. What had this young renunciant who had depended for his daily bread on the charity of others and read in the flickering light of earthen lamps which Hindu women leave at temple-gates and wells, to give ? Virajanand knew that Dayanand had nothing of worldly value to

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offer him, nor did he set much store by any such gift. Dayanand came with a handful of cloves, which the Guru considered too poor a *dakshina* for the good that he had done him. The parental affection he had bestowed on his pupil merited a better reward.

"What may I offer then ? Please let me know your commands," said the disciple.

"Yourself," said the Guru. "Your very life as an offering at the altar of motherland smarting under the burden of untruth, false beliefs, ignorance and corruption. I want your 'self' to disseminate truth and wage warfare against the falsehoods that are prevailing."

And did Dayanand hesitate ? The pledge was given willingly and never was a human pledge fulfilled more faithfully.

It is such masters and such pupils that India needs and it is such education that can end India's troubles.

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CHAPTER XX

DAYANAND, THE SAVIOUR OF HINDUISM

The past of the Hindus has been, beyond question, a glorious one. They were the original teachers and leaders of mankind, and had enjoyed a very high level of civilization and culture when the rest of the world was in a comparatively barbarous condition. Aryavarta was the sacred land of cultured humanity. The Aryas carried the torch of learning and Dharma to the remotest corners of the world. They were the originators of literature and theology. In the words of Mrs. Manning "the Hindus had the widest range of mind of which man is capable." Their national character as regards chivalry, honour and truthfulness was unrivalled. With the lapse of time, however, decline set in amongst them, and they forgot the lofty doctrines they had once

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preached to the world. They threw their rich legacy to the winds, and became weak in body and mind. Aryavarta became a house divided against itself. Outsiders with a much inferior culture availed themselves of this moment of weakness, and took possession of this ancient land of rishis only to accentuate and accelerate its degeneration. "The people who had reached the summit of spiritual glory, and the pinnacle of wordly prosperity; who carried their message of peace, good-will, enlightenment and happiness to every part of the world; who taught arts and sciences to the un-enlightened nations of both the hemispheres; who were justly celebrated as the greatest, the richest and the wisest people on earth, became hopelessly divided, weak and ignorant, strangers to their sublime language and their superb literature, unable to defend themselves against foreign invasions, unable to protect their arts and sciences, their noble culture, their magnificent civilisation, and their divine religion."

Such was the Hinduism as Dayanand found it—steeped in ignorance and superstition, torn asunder by prejudice and selfishness. The degraded condition of the so-called custodians of Hindu traditions simply shocked him. With a

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faith all his own, he made up his mind to sacrifice himself to rekindle the flickering flame of Hindu culture. His knowledge of India's past gave him hope for the future. He saw the Divine hand in the great fact that the Hindus had been able to survive all the political revolutions social upheavals the world had seen since the Mahabharata. They had bent but they had not broken absolutely. Despite terrible onslaughts on his religion, the average Hindu continued to love his religion,—though considerably perverted on account of poor guidance. The persistence of the Hindu filled him with hope. It did not take him long to realise that it was the inherent truth of Hinduism, the vitality and greatness of its civilisation that had helped it to persist so long. Hinduism, must be re-vitalised, he thought to himself and with a unique confidence he set himself to this herculean task.

His equipment for this great work was no less unique. His education was exclusively confined to a study of Sanskrit, and he had learnt all that was best in Sanskrit literature. He was a master of Sanskrit Philosophy and Theology. The genius of Vedic culture had taken a deep root in his mind. His knowledge of Aryan thought and civilisation was so profound, and

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his appreciation of it so great that it seemed he was living in the company of the ancient rishis. He was conversant with the Hindu ideal of life—its ethical and moral codes. He had at the same time familiarised himself with the achievements of the Hindus in the realms of philosophy, science and art. He was thus a Hindu of Hindus with not the slightest tinge of foreign influence. Coupled with this equipment was his towering intellect his keen discernment, and his far-reaching vision. The first enabled him to measure swords with the mightiest of pandits, the so-called keepers of people's conscience, with the help of the second he could diagnose the disease of decaying Hinduism and the third led him to feel that the best way to honour the past is to improve upon it. His difficulties were many : conservatism, vested interests, foreign government, foreign faiths but perhaps the greatest was the opposition from Hindus themselves—Hindus for whose sake he was prepared to stake his all. But Dayanand, a celibate of spotless character, equipped with a renunciation all his own, was out to give fight. His part was to act according to his light unmindful of what amount of success might be his portion,

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Dayanand envisaged to himself the stages through which the Hindus had fallen and felt that the process of their rejuvenation would mostly mean retracing each step. Knowing that a Hindu was essentially religious and that the Hindu civilisation was based on religion, he decided to make their religion a means for their regeneration. The Hindus had not been un-Hinduised to such an extent as to lose their faith in the Vedas. In the words of Arvindo Ghosh "Even when the Vedas were no longer understood, even when their traditions were lost behind Pauranic forms, they were still held in honour, though without knowledge, as authoritative revelation and inspired Book of Knowledge, the source of all sanctions and standard of all truth." Dayanand, therefore, decided to take his stand on the rock of the Vedas and to teach the Hindus what the Vedas contained. His task mainly was not to defend the Vedas against those who did not admit their authority but against those who while professing to believe in them used them as an authority sanctioning the malpractices that they carried on.

The task before Dayanand was to prove to the Hindu nation that idol-worship, child-marriage, the caste-system based on birth, untouch-

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ability and other pernicious customs of this type which were eating into the vitals of this society had no sanction behind them, and to show that the mythological interpretation of the Vedas was a later development at the hands of Pauranic pandits who had tried to find in the Vedas sanction for the ideas they preached and acted upon. The Western scholars with their meagre knowledge of Sanskrit had followed them blindly and their perverted and faulty translations had made our ancient lore the laughing-stock of the world. Taking his stand on the ancient *nairukta* system, Dayanand tried to purge this lore of Pauranic myths and historical descriptions. Arvindo Ghosh has rightly said that immediately the whole character of the Vedas is fixed in the sense Dayanand gave to it, "the merely ritual, mythological, polytheistic interpretation of Sayana collapses, the merely meteorological and naturalistic European interpretation collapses. We have instead a real scripture, one of the world's sacred books and the divine word of a lofty and noble religion." Again to quote Principal Balkrishna "the rationalistic spirit of research brought to bear upon the exegesis of the Vedas forms the most impor-

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tant contribution of Dayanand. It is his commentary alone, which attempted to give a rational meaning of each verse. In looking upon the Vedas as the word of God, he was in good company of all the saints, seers and sages of ancient India. He gave to the Hindu society the bedrock of the Vedas instead of the shifting sands of mythological Puranas and contradictory Smritis. He saved the oldest book in the library of man from the oblivion and slur of being a collection of songs of primitive shepherds and cultivators. He gave a crushing reply to the oriental and occidental people who called the authors of the Vedas buffoons, knaves, and spirits of darkness, and the Vedas incoherent rhapsodies of knaves. He alone by his sharp criticism of the Buddhist, Charvaka and Arhata systems made the ground slip from under their very feet. He established the supremacy of the Vedas against the onslaughts of the Muslims, Christians, scientists, evolutionists and theists." Dayanand's discovery of the key to the interpretation of the Vedas in itself, entitles him to everlasting gratitude of the Hindu nation. We need not bend down our heads in shame at the mention of the Vedas. He has restored them to their pristine glory and

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has thus cured us of our self-despisings.

Thus armed, Dayanand began his tirade against the time-honoured abuses and pernicious customs that had reduced the Hindu nation to a state of abject helplessness. His hatred of hypocrisy and unholiness was so strong and pronounced that he could by no means be persuaded to hold parleys with them. For full twenty years he tried to purify Hinduism of all the dust and rust that had gathered about it during many thousand years. By preaching the gospel of pure monotheism, he purged religious worship of idolatry. He raised the status of women, fought against child-marriage, broke the barriers of untouchability, advocated education among boys and girls alike and divested the caste-system of its rigidity. The above work of social reform among the Hindus which has led to so much of national regeneration in India is the subject of another chapter and, therefore, only a passing mention thereof would suffice here. But our study of Dayanand as saviour of Hinduism would not be complete without a reference to the prosely-tisation of non-Hindus which he declared as perfectly legitimate and in accordance with the Shastras. He could not approve of the practice

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of Hindus living within a series of ramparts pierced with gates that permitted egress but no ingress. That in the course of a thousand years the Muslim population grew from nil to about 25 per cent and the Hindu shrank from about 100 per cent to about 65 per cent is a proof positive of the fact that the Hindus have literally driven away millions, generation after generation from their own fold into the folds of other religions. Dayanand felt painfully that the Aryan religion which had assimilated hundreds of thousands of outsiders within itself had lost its vitality and power of absorption. The Hindus had forgotten their secret of success and strength and had permitted their kith and kin to bid good-bye to the faith of their forefathers. The Muslims and the Christians tore their religion to shreds, ridiculed it as something nonsensical and in their ignorance and false notions of tolerance they tamely tried to think that the critics might be right in their criticism. Depression and a spirit of defeatism were holding their minds, and they had not the requisite knowledge to tell their adversaries that those who live in glass-houses have no business to hurl stones at others. The proverbially peace-living Hindu suffered this

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humiliation quietly and abjectly. The advent of Dayanand at this moment was a Godsend. Not only did he show the beauties of Hinduism, but demonstrated the weakness of those who in their imagined strength had been really trading on the ignorance of the Hindus. "Dayanand showed effectively that Hinduism need not tortoise-like withdraw in its shell when faced with danger, he even gave it pointed horns which could be used as defensive instruments to enable it to survive in the world if it chose to." The Hindu nation was rejuvenated, it gave up its pessimism and despondency. The uncompromising counter-assaults of Dayanand created a flurry in the enemy's camp. When it became known that even a born Muslims or Christian could be taken into the fold of the Arya Samaj, their consternation knew no bounds. They called Dayanand fussy, quarrelsome and intolerant, but they would not see the beam in their own eyes. It was nothing more than Hinduism setting its house in order. It was Dayanand's achievement to create a militant society in Hinduism to serve as its standing sentinel. How far that society has succeeded in checking the activities of those who openly avowed their determination to destroy the Hindu religion is a fact known to every Hindu child in India.

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CHAPTER XXI

DAYANAND, THE MAKER OF MODERN INDIA

Dayanand did not directly concern himself with what goes by the name of politics and what really aims at wresting more and more political rights from an unwilling government. He believed that if Indians became strong in body and mind and got rid of their social disabilities, political freedom would follow as a necessary consequence. It was his view that men of character cannot long remain in political thraldom. In his opinion independence cannot be got by begging. He has therefore, been looked upon as a socio-religious reformer and there may be many who would grudge him the title of a nation-builder, for he did not break lances with the government. It is, however, becoming increasingly clear to the political reformers of the country that their fight against the government should proceed hand in hand with efforts for the social amelioration of the people. They have realised

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that the former in the absence of the latter is like building a mighty superstructure on foundations of sand. When Mahatma Gandhi says that Brahmacharya is a national necessity, that the movement for Swarajya is a movement for self-purification, that untouchability is a heinous crime which has no sanction in our sacred books, that swadeshi is the hand-maid of Swarajya—things which Dayanand advocated before the Indian National Congress came into existence, does it not demonstrate incontrovertibly that he was a seer—a precursor of Gandhi—a veritable maker of modern India ?

All the same, it would be wrong, to think that Dayanand did not realise the fact that political slavery is the mother of many a national drawback. How many of us know that Dayanand used the word Swaraj long before it was used by those great patriots, Dadabhoy Naroji and Tilak? How significant is this passage in the *Satyartha Prakasha*, "Say what you will, the indigenous native rule is by far the best. A foreign government, perfectly free from religious prejudices, impartial towards all—the natives and the foreigners—kind, beneficent and just to natives like their parents though it may be, can never

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make the people perfectly happy." Dayanand's political views were imbued with a spirit of democracy. He says in the same book that "people should always see that their country is administered not by a single individual but by councils. No single individual should be invested with absolute power. The king who is the President of the Assembly and the Assembly itself should be interdependent on each other. Both should be controlled by the people who in their turn should be governed by the Assembly."

"If this system be not followed and the king be independent of the people and has absolute power, he would impoverish the people and oppress them. A despotic ruler does not let any one else grow in power, robs the rich, usurps their property by unjust punishment and accomplishes his selfish end."

"Let all men, therefore, elect the most learned men, as members of the Educational Assembly, the most devout men, as members of the Religious Assembly and the men of the most praiseworthy character as members of the Legislative Assembly, and let that great man among them who possesses most excellent

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qualities, is highly accomplished, and bears most honourable character, be made the Head or President of the Political Assembly."

"Let the three Assemblies harmoniously work together, and make good laws, and let all abide by those laws, let them all be of one mind in affairs that promote the happiness of all. All men should subordinate themselves to the laws that are calculated to promote general well-being; they should be free in matters relating to individual well-being."

These words express the very essence of our philosophy of Swaraj. None felt more keenly the humiliation of our country's bondage and not infrequently did he shed bitter tears over the sad state of this ill-starred land. It pained him immensely to see his country walking on all fours and he tried to analyse the cause of her downfall. "The causes of the foreign rule in India," he says, "are mutual feud, differences in religion, want of purity in life, lack of education, child marriage, marriage in which the contracting parties have no voice in the selection of their life-partners, indulgence in carnal gratification, untruthfulness and other evil habits, the neglect of study of the Vedas,

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and other malpractices. It is only when brothers fight among themselves that an outsider poses as an arbiter. Mutual feud ruined the Kauravas, the Pandavas and the Yadavas in the past. The same fatal disease is still clinging to us. None knows whether this dreadful fiend will ever leave us or rob us of all our happiness and plunge us in the depth of misery. The Aryas are still treading the despicable path of the despicable low Duryodhana, the destroyer of his race and the enemy of his country. May God through His mercy rid us of this dreadful disease."

Dayanand was really anxious to see various religious bodies in India brought together on a common platform for the work of reform. It was he who convened the first 'Unity Conference in India in 1877. He proposed before the Conference that they should have the same set of principles to believe in, and work on the same lines but this proposal was not acceptable to those present including Sir Sayyad Ahmad and Babu Keshub Chandar Sen. Unfortunately the bitter hatred with which Dayanand is looked upon by the Muslims, Christians and Sanatanists whose faiths he ruthlessly criticised as a painful duty, has clouded the ideal of his life which he has so

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beautifully put forth at the close of his great book—"The sole aim of my life which I have also endeavoured to achieve is to help to put an end to this mutual wrangling, preach universal truths, bring all men into the fold of one religion whereby they may cease to hate each other, and, instead, may firmly love one another, live in peace and work for their common weal. May this doctrine, through the grace and help of God, with the support of all truthful, honest and learned men who are devoted to the cause of humanity, reach every nook and corner of this earth, so that all may acquire righteousness and wealth; gratify legitimate desires and attain salvation and thereby elevate themselves and live in happiness. This alone is the chief object of my life."

Dayanand had the far-sighted vision to see that caste is the greatest curse of India. Based on a wrong interpretation of the well-known Purusha Sukta, it had been working for the disruption of the Hindu Society. It pained him to see that this single institution, more than anything else, had been retarding the development of India into a nation. The distinction of high-caste and low-caste had relegated millions of

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India's sons and daughters to the position of helots whose very touch was considered pollution. It was no wonder that so many of them had turned away from the faith of their forefathers, just for the privilege of being treated as human beings. The wonder really was that in spite of the inhuman treatment meted out to them, millions of these untouchables were still sticking to their ancestral faith. Dayanand raised his mighty voice against the theory of caste which he pronounced as thoroughly un-Vedic. He declared that every man should be treated as man, and there should be equal treatment and equal opportunities for all. Classification in the society should not be based on heredity or birth-right, but on the qualities and actions of an individual. His declarations based on scriptural authority could not go unheeded. Any non-Sanskritist might have cried himself hoarse and the custodians of orthodoxy would have laughed him to scorn, but here was a Vedic scholar prepared to meet them on their own ground—a scholar who believed with them that classification is esssential but differed with regard to the basis thereof. In the words of K. P. Jayswal, the renowned Sanskrit scholar, "Dayanand had the humanity of the Buddha,

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but he combined with it the preservative complex of Shankar. The Buddha denounced the whole social structure as based on false notions of birth and caste inequality and preached a revolution. Dayanand emphasised, on the other hand, the traditional conservative regard for the Vedas and Vedic culture, but he did not have the limitation of Shankar and rose above it and pronounced that the theory of caste was false, un-Vedic and un-Hindu. Such a thing which was a negation of the laws of Manu and a contradiction of the accepted view of the Pursha Sukta, would not have been accepted by the Hindu Society, unless it came from such a national type as Swami Dayanand, who spoke Sanskrit with the ease of the Rishis, who had the selflessness of Narada and Durvasa, who could consume the cause of injustice with the fire of his speech, like the Buddha, and who could be irresistible in polemics like Shankar. He proved a super man. He overpowered the mystic professional Guru, the upholder of Avatars, the worshipper of gods and stones, places and pilgrimages, miracle-worker, etc, etc. He installed the man in the street into his true position in society, he put him in direct worship of one God, like Muhammad.

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And his God was the Hindu rationalistic God to whom man never becomes a helpless slave. The Sanyasi Dayanand gave freedom to the soul of the Hindu, as Luther did unto the European. And he forged that freedom from inside, *i.e.*, from Hindu literature itself." One can never overestimate the good Dayanand did to India by denouncing the caste-system and by giving the Hindus a new lease of life through social justice. Fifty years after his death Mahatma Gandhi (who too by a strange coincidence hailed from Kathiawar) made up his mind to fast unto death for the vindication of the same principle for which Dayanand stood. One cannot help paying homage to the prophetic vision of the Great Swami.

Dayanand did not overlook so many other pernicious customs of which a passing mention has been made in the previous chapter. The women of India owe a deep debt of gratitude to him who did so much for their emancipation. He believed in sex-equality and his advice was that *purdah* should be discarded, girls should have the same facilities for education as boys have and should not be married before the age of sixteen. He found India with its woman-force effete as a crippled nation, and he was anxious that women

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should be restored to the elevated status which they enjoyed in Vedic times. He advocated re-marriage of widows who on account of inhibitions on widow-marriage were tempted into a life of vice and corruption. Of course, the best thing, according to him, was that neither widows nor widowers should remarry, but if they could not lead a single life, consistent with canons of purity, they might remarry. It is thus that he attempted to relieve the cribbed and cabined woman-hood of India.

Dayanand was an ardent advocate of Swadeshi. The ordinary requirements of every country should, he says, be supplied within that country. At Wazirabad Swamiji asked for a knife, and when a knife of foreign make was brought to him, he indignantly remarked that it was a thousand pities that at Wazirabad where cutlery was an important industry, they could not supply him a knife of native manufacture. This should not lead us to believe that he was an advocate of secluded self-sufficiency, on the contrary, he was a great believer in foreign travel and inter-national trade. The following extracts from the *Satyartha Prakasha* give ample food for reflection :

"The ancient Indians used to go abroad to all parts of the world for the purposes of trade,

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travel or on political business. The present-day bug-bear of pollution of one's character and faith through travelling abroad is simply due to the false teaching of the wiseacres and the growth of dense ignorance. Those who do not hesitate to go abroad, and thereby associate with people of various foreign countries, study their customs and manners, increase their trade and augment their political power, become fearless and bold and attain great power and prosperity by studiously imbibing the good qualities and adopting the good customs and manners of the foreigners, and rejecting their faults, evil habits and bad manners...Let all good men understand that religion has reference to one's soul and good life. When we live righteous lives, foreign travel can do us no harm ..Can a country ever make any progress unless its people trade with or extend their rule over other countries? What can you expect but misery and poverty, when the people of a country trade only among themselves, whilst the foreigners control their trade and rule over them" Is any greater proof required to show that Dayanand was a progressive patriot?

Dayanand's scheme of national regeneration did not ignore the necessity of a *lingua franca* for India. He felt that Hindi being the most extensively spoken and understood of all the indigenous languages, and having the advantage of being based on the most scientific alphabet, could be given that high place. Although himself a Gujarati, he abandoned the language of his

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province in favour of Arya Bhasha and wrote his monumental work the *Satyartha Prakasha* in that language. He realised as most of the educationists have begun to realise to-day that Indian students should not be plagued with a foreign medium, and that all instruction should, as far as possible, be imparted in the country's own language. He did not want that the study of English should be neglected, he only wanted the vernacular of the country to take its proper place. He says, "First study the works bequeathed to you by your rishis, digest their philosophy, assimilate their thoughts and then supplement such a kind of oriental learning with the occidental knowledge. Do not neglect the study of English as it is the Raja–bhasha." He wanted students to be conversant with their own culture and traditions lest they should be anglicized to such an extent, that they should know more about Bacon and Mill than about Kapila or Patanjali. With this object in view he tried to give a new impetus to the study of Sanskrit as well. Dayanand's advocacy of Hindi found support from leaders of the Nationalist movement including Mahatma Gandhi. In fact, all the lovers and writers of Hindi give Dayanand the foremost place among the patrons of Hindi in the modern age. And that Hindi has come to be adopted as the national language of free India many be looked upon as one of Dayanand's greatest triumphs.

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CHAPTER XXII

DAYANAND, THE BENEFACTOR OF HUMANITY

Dayanand was not only a social and religious reformer, a scholar, an educationist and a great patriot but he was much more. He was a harbinger of Truth and Love, a benefactor of mankind, essentially a World-Teacher. Many would not concede him that status today ; he is so near us that most of us cannot see him in his true perspective. Others are so obsessed with his criticism of their creeds to the falsity of which they are intent on being blind, that they are not prepared to appreciate his work with an unbiased mind. There are many who even now look upon him as a fanatic and sectarian of the most intolerant type. Time has not yet arrived to assign Dayanand his true place in world history. But it is

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coming and coming inevitably. Heretics of to-day are the prophets of to-morrow. The ignorant child has nothing but unmitigated hatred for the surgeon who applies the knife with the best of intentions. Who recognised Jesus as benefactor of mankind during his life or even a century after his death ? Who gave the Buddha the high place he holds to-day in the hearts of men at the time he started his tirade against the malpractices of his day ?

Dayanand says in his autobiography: "The purpose of my life is the pursuit of Truth in thought, speech and deed." Truth was indeed the most dominant passion of his life. His whole life was a search for Truth. He began as an orthodox Hindu, then became a Vedantist and at last a worshipper of one God. The books he loved in his earliest years he discarded ungrudgingly when his ever-expanding knowledge and experience convinced him of their falsity. The one basic article of his creed was Truth as discovered by knowledge or science. Those who call him a narrow-minded sectarian should not be blind to the fact that one who would so scathingly criticise the Hinduism of his day could not spare Christianity or Islam, when his pursuit of Truth necessitated that

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The religion of his forefathers ought to have been much dearer to him, but in fact, it suffered a thousand times greater exposure at his hands than Christianity or Islam. Dayanand was no hankerer after fame or popularity, he was a fearless exponent of Truth. There is according to him, no limitation, no finality to Truth, and he laid no such limit or boundary to its search and discovery. He laid it down as a principle of the Arya Samaj that 'we should always be ready to accept Truth and renounce untruth.' It is remarkable that he did not qualify and narrow down the principle of Truth to that discovered by him. He wanted that we should look for, investigate, discover and accept truth from every source of human activity. He never intended to found a religion or establish a sect; the Arya Samaj he founded was simply a society to wean people of all creeds from the paths of untruth. He was no partisan. In a scuffle in which the Arya Samajists were to blame, he reprcached them and openly declared that if an inquiry were instituted by the government, his evidence would go against them. I could not do better than give an extract from his introduction to the *Satyartha Prakasha*, to indicate the lines along which his mind worked.

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"To speak of, write about and believe in a thing as it is, constitutes Truth. He that is prejudiced tries to prove that even his error is truth, while the truth of his religious opponent is error. He cannot, therefore, know what the true religion is. Hence this alone is the bounden duty of truthful and learned men to unfold the right nature of Truth and error before all men, after having ascertained what promotes their welfare and what is prejudicial to their interests. They should embrace what is true and reject what is false. Though the human soul possesses the capacity for ascertaining truth, yet through self-interest, obstinacy, wrong-headedness, ignorance and the like it renounces truth and inclines towards untruth. But we have not done such a thing in writing this book, nor has it been our object to hurt anyone's susceptibilities or harm anyone. On the other hand, our aim has been to further the advancement of the good of mankind and to help all men in the ascertainment of truth whereby they could embrace the truth and reject falsehood, because there is certainly no other way of elevating the human race. Any suggestions made to me with a view to benefit mankind, on

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being found good, will be acceptable. There are undoubtedly many learned men among the followers of every religion. Should they free themselves from prejudice and accept the universal truths, that is, those truths that are found alike in all religions and are of universal application, and reject all things in which they differ, and treat each other lovingly, it will be greatly to the advantage of the world, for differences among the learned create bad blood among the ignorant masses which multiplies all sorts of sorrows and sufferings, and destroys their happiness. This evil, which is so dear to the heart of the selfish, has sunk all men into the greatest depths of misery. Whoever tries to do anything with the object of benefiting mankind is opposed by the selfish people and various kinds of obstacles are thrown in his way. But finding support in the belief that truth must conquer and not error, and that it is the path of rectitude alone that men of learning and piety have always trodden, true teachers never get indifferent to the promotion of public good, nor give up the preaching of truth. Though we were born in Aryavarta (India) and still live in it, yet just as we do not defend the evil doctrines and practices of the religions

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prevailing in the country, on the other hand, expose them properly, in like manner, we deal with alien religions. We treat the foreigners in the same way as our own countrymen as far as the elevation of the human race is concerned. It behoves all men to act likewise."

This should make it abundantly clear that Dayanand was a believer in universal brotherhood and that, though his mission was chiefly intended for the betterment of Hinduism, the vision that the human race might in some distant future rally round one religion, the Religion of Truth was not absent from the eye of his faith. He exposed the false doctrines of orthodox Hinduism, Christianity and Islam, but there is not a single instance to show that he evinced hatred towards any person for holding views different from his own. He had nothing but love and forgiveness even for his deadliest enemies. He abhorred hypocrisy but not the hypocrite; he hated sin but not the sinner. He believed that there is future for the sinner who deserves pity and love but not contempt. The glory of man is the love he evinces to his fellow-beings. The magnanimity which Dayanand showed towards those who offended him was rare—almost superhuman.

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People threw brickbats and stones at him when he spoke; he was greeted with invective at many places, but he forgave them all, for he felt they knew not what they were doing. He was poisoned many a time, the culprits were at his mercy and he interceded for their acquittal. Liberty was his mission and he would not see any man fettered. The last glorious act of his life stands unique—not only did he forgive his assassin, he provided him with means to escape punishment. This is the high water-mark of love and forgiveness in the history of India—nay of the world. Truly Dayanand was a superman equipped with the Torch of Love to lead the erring humanity unto the Temple of Love.

He was a friend of the poor and the lowly. He left the comfort of home and hearth to join the fraternity of the poor For years he wandered in forests and mountains, ate what the poor eat, and slept as the poor sleep. For days and days he would go without food, and in the most inclement weather he would sleep on bare earth with nothing between him and the sky above. For years he wandered with his loin-cloth as his sole property but equipped

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with a richness of mind all his own. He revelled on his self-imposed poverty. He had offers of wealth, but he spurned them, for he preferred the poor man's cottage to the rich man's palace. Trained in this school of poverty, he was all love for those whom the cultured society disowned. An 'untouchable' brought him rice and curry to eat, and Dayanand accepted his gift of love. A Brahmin standing by protested saying, "You are polluted for you have eaten the meals brought by this man." What was Dayanand's reply? "Food may be polluted in two ways, either when it is procured by force causing pain to another or when it is mixed with a dirty thing. But here is a poor man earning his bread with the sweat of his brow. His food is the best." It was impossible that such a humanitarian by temperament should not feel for the woes of the orphans, the widows, and the outcastes. At a lecture by Swamiji a rich banker began to shoot glances of hate at a butcher who was also listening. The poor outcaste saw the meaning in the rich man's eyes, and was about to leave when the lecturer who was noticing all this came to his rescue remarking, "My lectures are meant for the butchers and their like."

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Dayanand's message of Truth and Love is for the world, not for India alone. He toiled mainly for India, for he felt that a degraded and down-trodden India is a menace to world-unity. It was his endeavour to see the world united in a common bond of brotherhood, based on Truth. His exposure of untruth made him many enemies who decried everything that came from him. But how long can Truth be suppressed ? Only seventy years have elapsed since his death, and a mighty change has come over the minds of the people. Dayanand's ideas are the stock-in-trade of every reformer, political or social. Whether they acknowledge the debt they owe to him or not, is a different matter. History is giving its verdict, however. Dayanand is no longer the founder of a religious sect, but a pioneer of progress, a true nation-builder, a veritable World-Deliverer.

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THE THUNDER VOICE

The spirit wings of life in darkness veiled
Drooped sadly over India's ancient shore,
The vine that once the grape of wisdom bore
Lay half decayed. The sun of truth was paled
By clouds of ignorance and *tantrik* rite.
Perverted customs had enslaved the race,
While superstition took pure reason's place,
And held tyrannic sway with cruel might
When from Himalayan heights a giant came
Whose mighty brow shone with the light of day
He pierced the midnight gloom with wisdom's ray
Bearing aloft the torch of Vedic flame,
Truth's echo throbbed and stirred the sleeping land
Where spoke the thunder voice of Dayanand.

—A. CHRISTINE ALBERS

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